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# AT THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

THE RESULTS OF  
THE NINTH PLENUM  
OF THE COMINTERN

*By*

P. Braun

SIXPENCE



4. Y. Gristly

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## INTRODUCTION

THE present world position is characterised on the one hand by the growing danger of fresh imperialist wars directed against the first socialist State, of capitalist rationalisation with the complete enslavement of the working class as its aim, and a murderous war on the Chinese revolution, accompanied by a frenzied attack on the peoples of colonial and semi-colonial countries; and on the other by the growing activity of the proletarian masses in capitalist countries, the intensifying struggle of the oppressed peoples, and the presence of palpable achievements in the realm of socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. In this situation social-reformism is emerging as an international organisation actively participating both in the work of preparing fresh great wars and in the conduct of the little wars now being carried on against the eastern peoples, while taking shelter under the slogans of pacifism; and simultaneously it is the chief conductor of capitalist rationalisation. Social-reformism is fulfilling both these functions in its quality as an organisation which is becoming directly fused with the apparatus of the employers and the State. In the one sphere social-reformism plays, if not the leading role, then at least that of skirmisher: throughout the whole of the capitalist world social-reformism is the champion of the ideological preparation for a military attack on the U.S.S.R.

The Comintern Plenum was called upon to resolve concrete tactical problems connected both with the struggle of the colonial peoples in the East and with the increasing and intensifying class struggle in the countries of capitalism. The first group of questions is



naturally closely and inseparably connected with the problems of the Chinese revolution, which is the chief factor not only from the point of view of the accompaniment of those great tasks which directly confront it, but also from the point of view of the influence which the fate of the Chinese revolution will have on the course of the national revolutionary movement in the East and the stabilisation of capitalism in Europe. The second group of questions was worked out in connection with those concrete problems which arose before the world proletarian movement in separate countries, in particular in Britain and France, and also in connection with the general task which directly arises from capitalist rationalisation, with the task of defending the trade unions as the organs of the class struggle of the working class.

The brochure to which we now invite the reader's attention contains an analysis of the general conspectus provided by the Comintern Plenum (Chapter One), and also an analysis of all the definite resolutions: On the British question (Chapter Two), the French question (Chapter Three), the Communists' tasks in the economic struggle (Chapter Four), and the problems of the Chinese revolution (Chapter Five). The resolution adopted on the question of the Trotskyist Opposition will be found in the Appendix. This resolution forms a kind of continuation of the resolution adopted at the Fifteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U., and contains those additions which naturally arise out of our experience of various Trotskyist groups in different parts of the world.

The Comintern resolutions, and in particular the British resolution, were greeted by a malignant campaign organised both by the social-reformists and by the bourgeois press. In a united front the capitalist and reformist hacks endeavour to present all the resolutions

of the staff of the world revolution as "orders from Moscow." The Comintern never regarded itself as a federation of *national* parties. On the contrary, it has vigorously striven and still strives to transform the advance-guard of the *world* working class into a single party. The Ninth Plenum of the Comintern marked an important stage on the road to this end. A thoughtful consideration of the work of the Plenum shows that in the settlement of each problem the strength of the Plenum consisted in the fact that it co-ordinated the experience of the entire world movement, plus the experience of the advance-guard of the working class in that country whose tasks were the subject of discussion. The organ of the British Liberals, the "Manchester Guardian," and MacDonald's organ, "Forward," endeavour by a comparison of the resolution of the Comintern Plenum on the British question with the theses of the majority of the Central Committee of the C.P.G.B., to prove to the British workers that the Comintern "binds" its will on the British Communists. But these worthy organs make no mention of the theses which were put forward on the one hand by comrades Dutt and Pollitt, and on the other by comrade Murphy. On these theses there is not a whisper. They are also silent on the fact that the majority of the C.C. themselves also put forward their theses as material for discussion, taking into account the fact that during the last eighteen months the work of the C.P.G.B. itself has been marked by the intermingling of two tactical lines: one which corresponded to the class relationship existing down to the General Strike, and the other which was dictated by the course of the class struggle during the period of the direct fusion of the leaders in the trade unions and the Labour Party with the State and the employers' apparatus.



The events which have followed during the brief period separating us from the close of the Plenum's work have confirmed the soundness of the fundamental positions put forward in the resolutions of that Plenum in a strikingly convincing fashion. In Britain the Air Minister, Hoare, while avoiding the giving of details of operations in Arabia, at the same time admitted that British air forces had in five cases bombarded the Arab State of the Yemen. Hoare's colleague, the Foreign Secretary Chamberlain, has communicated the information that Egypt's refusal to accept the agreement proposed by British imperialism will result in harm not to Britain but to Egypt. Simultaneously Ramsay MacDonald and George Lansbury endeavour to surpass each other in their support of the Conservative Government's insolently arrogant policy in regard to India. The new orientation of the social-reformists has been particularly revealed in the question of the abominable falsification called the "Zinoviev Letter." The most furious defender of the official speculators in the Foreign Office, and in particular of the hero of the "Zinoviev Letter," Gregory, proves to be no other than MacDonald. The "kind-hearted" Ramsay MacDonald considers that the Conservative Government dealt too severely with its former assistant, when they dismissed him for a number of speculative transactions. But the same good-natured and soft-hearted MacDonald is transformed into a ravenous wolf when it is a question not of hereditarily honourable aristocrats such as Gregory but of revolutionaries and Communists. In connection with the resolution of the Comintern Plenum, MacDonald calls not only on the Labour Party but also on the trade unions to take stern measures in regard to the Communists.

In France Poincaré has succeeded in transforming the latter part of the work of the Chamber, of the same

Chamber which was elected by the election of May 11th, 1924, when a majority was given to the "left" bloc, into a genuine triumph for the "national union." The "socialists" and the "lefts" have given their entire support to the latest legislation of the Poincaré Government, which legislation is drawn up in such a fashion that while it actually defends the interests of the employers, it would seem to be a bait to the great mass of voters. In the realm of foreign policy Poincaré is represented in the League of Nations, on the one hand, by the leader of the Socialist Party, Paul Boncour, and, on the other, by the secretary of the reformist Confederation of Labour, Jouhaux.

Finally, in Germany we have seen the breaking of a great strike movement among the metal-workers by the social-reformists. This breaking of a strike was a convincing proof and illustration of the accuracy of the Comintern's fundamental positions on the question of social-reformism's role in regard to the trade unions.

At the same time, the capitalists know and confess that notwithstanding the social-reformists' faithful service to the interests of capitalism, the movement of the masses leftwards is yielding concrete and perceptible results. In the interval between the Eighth and Ninth Plenums we have been witnesses of a great movement in defence of the First Republic of Labour, which found its expression in the Congress of Friends of the U.S.S.R. The Congress of Friends of the U.S.S.R. represented the direct union of the proletarian advance-guard of capitalist countries with the oppressed peoples on the platform of struggle against the war danger and the defence of the U.S.S.R. During the days following the Plenum the bourgeois press, in noting the increased number of Communists in the Polish Sejm, provides the following extremely interesting and instructive explana-



tion: "This number [of members of the Communist fraction in the Polish Sejm] would not present any menace if it were not for the fact that we know that these mandates have been obtained in electoral regions populated by workers, where the Polish Socialist Party has lost influence." (The "Warsaw Courier.") And a few days later another Polish bourgeois newspaper dotted the i's and crossed the t's still more definitely when it declared that it is a poor Socialist Party which is unable successfully to struggle with the Communists.

The struggle against the Communists and the revolutionary workers—such is the chief function of the social-reformists. An intensification of the struggle against capitalism by a developed attack on social-reformism—such is the task of the conscious advance-guard of the working class.

P. BRAUN.

## AT THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE NEW FUNCTION OF SOCIAL-REFORMISM

FOUR years have passed since the day when the Second International confidently announced the approach of a new pacifist era both in international relations and in relations between labour and capital. MacDonald in Britain and Herriot in France were proclaimed the apostles of reformism, who were called to establish paradise on our sinful earth, while avoiding the hell of civil war and the socialist revolution. And the social-reformists of all countries sang like nightingales of the great "bloodless" victories of socialism and democracy, and contraposed these parliamentary achievements to the "Land of October," in which the victory of the proletariat was obtained at the cost of such enormous exertions and bloody sacrifices.

The social-reformists have long since forgotten these nightingale dithyrambs of theirs. The epoch which they hailed as the era of pacifism has been filled with the harsh and ruthless attack of capital on the conditions of labour in the chief capitalist countries on the one hand, and on the other with the intensified preparations for fresh great wars on a world scale and "little" wars against the peoples of the East, and against the great Chinese revolution in particular. Everywhere and always post-war capitalism is making good its stabilisation on the backs of the working class, preparing simultaneously for a resolution of the problem of a fresh



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partitioning of the world by the aid of fresh wars, which in their dimensions and ruthlessness should surpass even the "great" imperialist war of 1914-1918.

In this menacing situation, marked by sanguinary attacks on the nations of the East, a merciless attack on "their own" proletariat, and preparations for fresh wars, the features of social-reformism have radically changed. During the world war the social-democrats fulfilled the obligations of social-patriots. Each national social-democratic party faithfully and truly served its own fatherland, putting off international solidarity until the end of the war. During the period immediately following the war social-democracy used its strength for the support of the capitalist dam against the revolutionary struggle which was rising in a great wave throughout the world. During both periods the social-reformists fulfilled the function of lackeys to capitalism. In the present phase the social-reformists can no longer restrict themselves to this role. They are now pre-occupied with the task of transforming the independent organisations created by the working class into the direct instruments of the employers and the bourgeois State.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS OF THE NEW SOCIAL-REFORMISM

The new function of the social-reformists has grown up on a new economic basis. In former years, especially in those of pre-war times, the social-reformists contraposed reform to revolution. While continuing on the basis of defence of the capitalist system they could stand in defence of the every-day interests of the workers, the shortening of the working day, increase of wages, and development of social legislation. The strength of social-reformism arose from the basis of achievements both in the sphere of the every-day trade union struggle

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and in that of the parliamentary struggle. It goes without saying that these reforms were essentially the results not of the activities of the social-reformists, but of the mighty movement of the vast proletarian masses. But the reformists represented the leaders of this movement, and presented themselves to the great masses in the role of defenders of proletarian interests. To-day the position of capitalism has radically changed. Shaken by the war, in the present period capitalism not only cannot go on to further reforms in the direction of raising the minimum standard of existence of the working class and the improvement of their economic position, but with a view to its stabilisation is turning back the pages of history, and is depriving the proletariat both of those conquests and achievements which it obtained as an inheritance from a long period of class struggle in the pre-war epoch, and of the reforms won by the workers in the stormy post-war years. The social-reformists, in their capacity of faithful servants of capitalism, are compelled to change the landmarks. From being a party of social reforms they are being transformed into a party of naked social reaction.

In order to obtain a correct understanding of the new ideological basis of social-reformism it is necessary to consider in somewhat more detail the ways and means of the stabilisation of post-war capitalism.

The stabilisation of capitalism is in all European countries being carried through with the aid of so-called rationalisation, which consists in the perfecting of the organisation of production (trustification) and in the improvement of the technique of production (electricity, chemistry, new inventions). But everywhere and always this rationalisation is taking place in a situation of continually intensifying international competition. In this international competition certain countries are the



initiators of a higher tempo of rationalisation, while others, owing to various historical and objective conditions, are falling noticeably behind. But all European capitalist countries taken together are confronted with the obvious fact of the swift growth of the industrialisation of the world, which is taking place at a much swifter tempo than the development in absorption power of the world market. In addition, independently of the fact that in Europe itself not all countries are accomplishing the task of rationalisation with identical success, all Europe as a whole is moving forward along the road of intensification of production much more slowly than not only the United States but also than other countries outside the confines of Europe. Together with the United States of North America, the countries of swift industrialisation are on the one hand the eastern countries, who set out on the road of capitalist production during the war period, and on the other the countries of South America. This signifies that the countries which in pre-war days represented only a market for industrial goods are now beginning to adopt the role of competitors in their capacity as new industrial countries.

#### INDUSTRIALISATION AND THE WAR DANGER

The first and most important result of the industrialisation of the world is the increase of the centres of war danger. The attention of the imperialist exploiters is directed in the first place to the first socialist State and to the great Chinese revolution. The general class hatred towards the country of the dictatorship of the proletariat is intensified by imperialism's passionate endeavour to transform the great country of the Soviets—one-sixth of the globe—into its colony, and thus to solve the severe problem which has developed out of the industrialisation of the world, the problem of markets.

The same combination of general class interests with the direct interests of capitalism is to be observed at the present time in regard to China also. The Chinese revolution is the object of ruthless hatred on the part of imperialism, first and foremost because if it develops successfully it connotes the end of the rule of the imperialists over the oppressed East. But independently of these general imperialist interests, imperialism is interested in safeguarding to itself the possibility of an unhindered exploitation of the four hundred millions of Chinese people in their capacity as consumers of the produce of its industry.

The U.S.S.R. and China have been and remain the central points of the war danger. But together with this basic war danger we also observe other centres of greater or lesser war danger in various other parts of the world. From the point of view of capitalist competition, which is the prerequisite of new wars for the partitioning of the world in the future, we need to give special attention to the complex, and at present well-veiled mutual relationships between the former rulers of the sea—Britain, and the greatest imperialist giant of the modern age—the North American United States. Starting from 1921—from the Washington Conference—quite peculiar peace relations have been established between the United States and Britain, based on Britain's recognition of the pre-eminence of the United States, and on the latter's acceptance of Britain in the role of a younger companion in the task of realising their general imperialist devices.\* For this peace Britain has paid dearly. It has not only renounced its old military doctrine—"Britannia rules the waves"—but in order to implement its loyalty in regard to the United States it has been compelled to take

\* The realisation of the Dawes plan was the chief achievement of the Anglo-American coalition.



on the obligation of paying an enormous war debt in hard cash.

Britain has made these serious concessions to the United States in a situation of tense excitement in Britain itself and of a great revolutionary movement in the colonies, the Dominions and in countries under the protectorate of Great Britain—India, Ireland, and Egypt. It goes without saying that the ruling classes of Britain regarded their concessions as a temporary retreat, at the price of which they obtained a long breathing-space in order to gather strength and then again to start talking of their rights. The defeat of the General Strike and the miners' lock-out untied the hands of the British bourgeoisie, and from that moment they began to act more openly and more precisely with their demand of equality with the United States, hoping in the process of the struggle to pass from defence to attack and once more to attempt to restore its world leadership. Relations between John Bull and Uncle Sam are growing steadily more tense, and we are already observing preliminary reconnoitring skirmishes on various economic fronts, among which the oil war undoubtedly calls for special attention.

The Washington Conference marked the beginning of the co-operation between the falling pound and the rising dollar on the basis of the predominance of the United States. The failure of the Geneva Conference on naval disarmament (July, 1927) marked the end of that co-operation and the beginning of tenser relations between Britain and America.

The war danger is a reflection in the sphere of international relationships of the problem set up by the industrialisation of the world. And in the sphere of internal relationships the industrialisation of the world is leading to feverish exertions on the part of the ruling

classes of the European bourgeois States in the direction of the rationalisation of industry, in order that before the repartitioning of the world it may be possible by peaceful methods, *i.e.*, by a cheapening of goods, to win a better position on the world market.

#### EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN RATIONALISATION

The whole process of rationalisation in Europe is commonly called Americanisation. It is clear, none the less, that a mechanical transference of American methods of production, and in particular of American social relationships, to a European basis is unthinkable. The strength of American capitalism consists first and foremost in the fact that the United States is the sole country which has emerged victorious from the world war. The United States has not only succeeded in transforming the blood of the European workers and peasants into gold for its profit, but has succeeded in developing and perfecting their mighty productive apparatus, and thus occupying a dominating position on the world market. This privileged position of American capital naturally finds its reflection in the sphere of mutual relationships between labour and capital. The American bourgeoisie is now sufficiently strong to be still more successful than even Britain in the second half of last century in establishing at its side a "bourgeois proletariat" in the form of a numerous labour aristocracy. In addition the American bourgeoisie, even in pre-war days, was in the habit of dealing ruthlessly with all attempts to set up a class movement among the American proletariat. The strength of American capital consisted first in the swift growth of American capitalism, and secondly in the fluidity and the racial diversity of its proletarian composition, which was recruited from the most differentiated countries of the whole world,



earliest and first of all from those countries where the workers found themselves under strong economic and political oppression. The American bourgeoisie, of course, willingly availed themselves of the services of Gompers and his like. It was not for nothing that the American parliament decided to raise a monument to their faithful lackey, the late leader of the American Federation of Labour. Meantime, quite a solid proportion of the American bourgeoisie considered and assumed that it was possible to get along entirely without trade unions, even those of the Gompers type. The struggle for the "open shop," *i.e.*, for works in which actual members of the trade unions are not admitted, always enjoyed particular favour among the "hundred per cent." American capitalists. In these conditions, and in this situation, it was comparatively easy for American capital to harness the workers to their chariot and to exploit the workers' tendency towards organisation for the purpose of setting up so-called "company" unions, which are controlled and guided directly by the employers.

In America company unions are not by any means a post-war novelty. In a less developed form this system was applied even before the war, being on the one hand a proof of the strength of American capital, and on the other a proof of the far-sightedness of the American bourgeoisie. In connection with the strong development of American capitalism during the war and in the years after the war, the system of company unions naturally developed and was consolidated, while the formally independent trade unions—the unions in the American Federation of Labour—are striving to surpass the company unions in loyalty and devotion not only to the general interests of capitalism, but also to the private interests of capitalist employers.

One needs only to make a hasty survey of modern Europe to be convinced that the entire environment out of which the American system of "peace in industry" has grown is completely absent. Not only Britain but Germany and France can only accomplish the rationalisation of their industry mainly at the expense of a *worsening* of the position of the workers. In addition, in the main European countries the working class, both in pre-war days and in the years following the war, passed through an entirely different school of struggle against the employers and against the capitalist system. It is for this reason that in Europe the Americanisation of the Labour movement comes up against serious and hardly surmountable obstacles, and the ruling classes are fully aware of the fact that even modest achievements in this direction are impossible and unthinkable without the *active and organised* assistance of the social-reformists. And, of recent years, the social-reformists have occupied themselves only with "re-arming" in order successfully to accomplish the new mission laid upon them by the present stage of stabilisation of post-war capitalism.

The social-reformists are endeavouring to represent their services to rationalisation as a defence of "progress" in the sphere of technique and the organisation of production. Is it necessary to demonstrate that the struggle of the advance-guard of the working class is directed not against new inventions, but against the consequences of rationalisation, which carry the implication of the enslavement of the worker?

#### ENGLISH TRADE UNIONS AND INDUSTRIAL PEACE

In different countries the process of the "re-arming" of social-reformism takes different forms. It takes its clearest and most severe form in the country of classic trade unionism, in Britain. It is sufficient to compare



the policy of the trade union leaders in 1925 and in 1927 in order to see not only the direction but also the character of this re-arming.

In 1925 the entire trade union leadership was compelled to declare that it would not allow any attempt on the wages and conditions of the British miners, and to bring to the defence of the miners' interests the entire might of the organised trade union movement. The Baldwin Government understood, of course, that it could find ways and means of agreement with the leaders of the trade unions. None the less, the Conservative Government was simultaneously forced to reckon with the fact that the leaders found themselves under strong pressure from the working masses, and that their compliance would be conditioned not by their desires and hopes, but by the strength of that pressure to which they were being subjected. It was for this reason that the Baldwin Government was forced to restrain its inclinations and to make concessions, renouncing its attack on the miners for nine months.

Such was the situation on July, 1925 ("Red Friday"). Even before the nine months' period had elapsed the social-democrats had begun a furious campaign for the acceptance of the report of the Royal Commission, in order to obtain from the miners a voluntary acceptance of a worsening of their economic conditions. It was through no fault of the social-democrats that the campaign was unsuccessful. They laboured faithfully and truly, and the Baldwin Government fully valued their endeavours. It was no other than Baldwin who proposed to draw representatives of the General Council into the negotiations with the miners. One can hardly imagine that Baldwin had in mind the exploitation of the orators of the General Council in order to influence the mine-owners. Bald-

win's object in bringing the representatives of the General Council into the negotiations was to disarm the miners with their aid. The united efforts of the Government, the mine-owners and the General Council did not lead to the wished-for results. The miners' lockout became a fact. The whole working class of Britain was ready to stand to for the defence of the miners. Taking into account the seriousness of the position, the General Council and the leaders of the Labour Party took on themselves the organisation of that defence of the miners, so that by heading the movement it would be possible to behead it the more painlessly. And they achieved their object!

The significance of the fateful day of May 12th, 1926, consists in the very fact that the Baldwin Government was helpless to suppress and break up the General Strike without the organised assistance of the social-reformist machinery. This means that in Europe, and in Britain in the first place, the celebrated Americanisation can be carried out only on the backs of the working masses, by means of the machinery of the Labour movement in the control of the social-reformists.

The seven months' struggle of the miners which went on after the betrayal of the General Strike confirmed this position still further. The ruling classes were prepared to avail themselves of the assistance of any group in order the sooner to liquidate the miners' lock-out, which had struck serious blows at British capitalism. It appeared, however, that only the bureaucratic leaders of the trade union movement were faithful and dependable champions of the mineowners' Government. Only the trade union leaders could ensure the isolation of the miners in a situation where the miners had the sympathy of the great proletarian masses, and thus could obtain the defeat of a million miners, who



were condemned to starvation amid millions of other British proletarians who continued during all this time to work and to earn.

The services rendered by the social-reformists to British imperialism during these two great battles which were fused into one—the General Strike and the miners' lock-out—were unquestionably enormous, but at the same time they had a sporadic character. After the close of the miners' lock-out, secret conversations were initiated between Churchill and the leaders of the trade unions. These conversations were carried on without the knowledge not only of the vast proletarian masses, but even of the chief centres of the trade union movement. Certain communications, however, did get into the press. The official organ of the Labour Party endeavoured to represent these conversations as innocent festivities. None the less, there is no doubt that it was a question of the adaptation of the trade union movement for the systematic service of the interests of capitalist rationalisation. As the result of these conversations Baldwin confidently and boldly proposed to the Trades Union Congress (September, 1927) that it should make a gesture in the direction of peace in industry. The Trades Union Congress answered this with a resolution against Baldwin, addressed to the members of the trade unions, and with a declaration of the value and advantage of peace in industry, which was a business-like answer to the business-like proposal made by Baldwin. As the result of this exchange of notes a conference on "peace in industry" was initiated, the purpose of which is to ensure that, under the cover of this pacifist slogan, that operation which was carried out with such losses and with such sacrifices in regard to the miners, shall be

"painlessly" carried out in regard to the remainder of the British workers.\*

#### THE TRADE UNION LEADERS AND WAR

The Edinburgh Trades Union Congress by no means confined itself to the sanctioning of the Baldwin slogan of peace in industry. With ape-like dexterity the secretary of the General Council, Citrine, did everything possible to copy Chamberlain exactly in the question of relations with the Soviet trade unions. In order to assist Baldwin in his foreign policy, the General Council considered it necessary first to break up the Anglo-Russian Committee, then to resort to the same argument as Chamberlain had used in justifying his rupture of diplomatic relationships with the U.S.S.R. The leaders of the British trade unions thus complemented the slogan of peace in industry with the slogan of peace in international relationships: the first slogan conceals an attack on the workers, while the second conceals the organisation of war against the first Soviet State.

#### FRANCE AND GERMANY

The process of re-arming the social-reformists is observable not only in Britain, but in all other capitalist countries. In February this year the Miners' International considered the problem of the mining industry. The subject was raised owing to the existence of pressure on the miners in all countries, a pressure which has

\* The head of the chemical industry, Sir Alfred Mond, has thus formulated the task of peace in industry: In our view the prosperity of industry can be completely achieved under the conditions of a full and frank recognition of the facts as they actually are, and as full and frank a determination to increase the competitive power of British industry on the world market.



already entailed a number of strikes. The International was faced with the question of the extent to which it could organise international assistance to the miners in their legitimate resistance to the further pressure of the magnates of the mining industry. And to this question the International replied with a resolution, adopted by eight votes to three, which amounted to the need of setting up "an international organisation of production and distribution by means of international agreement." It is extremely characteristic that it was the British miners, who have experienced, and are still experiencing, all the charms of capitalist rationalisation in their persons, who voted against this proposal.

In France, where the trade union movement is not only weak but also disintegrated, the leaders of the reformist Confederation of Labour are bringing about the process of fusion between the trade union machinery and the machinery of the employers and the Government in greater freedom. In the National Economic Council, which is the chief organ of rationalisation of French industry, Poincaré is president, while the role of vice-president is played by—Jouhaux!

In Germany the struggle against strikes, which has become a struggle for the lengthening of the working day and the lowering of wages, is being carried on under the slogan of the sanctity of collective agreements and the obligatory nature of arbitration decisions. Thus, in all countries the social-reformists are fulfilling their obligations as the principal instrument of the bourgeoisie in the work of rationalising capitalist industry at the cost of the interests of the working class.

#### SOCIAL-REFORMISTS AND TRADE UNIONS

We have chiefly been discussing the trade unions. That, of course, does not signify that the political

organisations of the social-reformists are in the least to be distinguished from the trade union bureaucracy in the work of carrying through capitalist rationalisation. On the contrary. In the work of transforming the workers' organisations into the instruments of the ruling classes, the social-democracy of the world plays a leading role. The significance of the movements which have taken place recently consists in the fact that the social-reformists have succeeded in completely subjugating the trade union machinery, which, being in closer contact with the proletarian masses in certain countries and in Britain particularly, had put up a certain amount of resistance to the social-traitors. To-day the gulf between the trade union bureaucracy and the leaders of the social-reformist parties has completely vanished. The consolidation of social-reformism consists not only and not even so much in the fact that the centrist elements have either been eliminated, or are openly fulfilling the function of agents of the social-reformists, as first and foremost in the fact that the social-democrats and the trade union bureaucracy are acting in a united front. In order to carry through its schemes of rationalisation, European capitalism has need of the united efforts both of the leaders of the socialist organisations and of the bureaucracy of the trade union organisations, and this unity has already been achieved.

But in the European situation it is not so easy for social-reformism to carry through the work of "Americanising" the Labour movement. It comes up against the revolutionary tradition of the working class, and against the active organised resistance of the Communists and the left revolutionary elements in the Labour movement. It is for this very reason that in their struggle for "peace in industry" the social-reformists are carrying on a most ruthless and frenzied



war against the Communists and the revolutionary workers, and against such of them who are in trade unions in the first place. And this war is becoming more and more severe and aggressive in the measure that the revolutionary tendency of the working class is revealed with greater precision. The movement of the workers leftward corresponds with a still sharper movement of the social-reformists rightward, which in its turn conduces to the emancipation of the working class from the influence of social-reformism and to the crystallisation of a conscious class-relationship to social-reformism.

The rationalisation of capitalism is transforming the social-reformists into open social-reactionaries. This process of degeneration is accompanied by a frenzied struggle against all the forms and manifestations of democracy both in the socialist parties and in the trade unions. The social-reformists know and realise that they can only fulfil their new "mission" provided they can overcome the opposition of the masses. Consequently they are preoccupied with intensifying the power of the bureaucracy over the masses of members. Not only in Germany and France but in the traditional country of democracy, in Britain, the bureaucracy is dealing in the most ruthless fashion with the desires and hopes of the proletarian masses, resorting not merely to mass expulsions, but also to the modification of the constitution of the Labour Party and of the trade unions in order that the power may remain intact in the hands of permanent officials.

#### STABILISATION, RATIONALISATION AND THE COMINTERN

The Ninth Plenum of the Comintern was held at the moment when the movements taking place on the basis of stabilisation and rationalisation had become fully

formulated. The basic task of the Comintern consisted in more exactly defining the class content of these movements and in indicating a tactical line which would be in complete correspondence with the disposition of class forces, with the correlation of classes and with the differentiations within the working class itself. The Plenum had to take into account the fact that these movements were not everywhere taking on the same forms. For this reason the Plenum could not confine itself merely to a general estimate of the present disposition of class forces and the tasks of the Communist International, it had to elucidate in the most precise manner the general modifications which had taken place in the sphere of the trade union struggle, and to work out the problems of the class struggle in Britain and in France separately. The resolutions adopted on the above-mentioned problems contain the concrete determination of the tasks of the Communists in the sphere of the economic struggle, and also the general tasks of the Communist Parties of France and Britain. But if we take all the resolutions in their aggregate we obtain the general analysis of the present position in the capitalist countries generally, and in capitalist Europe in particular, which formed the basis of those tactical instructions which were formulated by the Comintern Plenum.

With these three problems—the trade union problem, the tasks of the British and the tasks of the French Communist Party—the problem of the Trotskyist Opposition is closely and inseparably connected. It would be a cruel error to evaluate the Trotskyist Opposition as a purely Russian or purely Soviet manifestation. On the contrary, an analysis of the activities of various groups which have united around the Trotskyist Opposition convincingly shows that in the Trotskyist Opposi-



tion we have an agent of social-reformism, which is carrying on the struggle against the advance-guard of the working class organised in the revolutionary trade unions, and against the Communist Party, not only with the aid of exclusions and persecutions, but also with the aid of disorganisation from within. It goes without saying that it is not so easy for social-reformism to accomplish its disorganising work in regard to the Communist Parties, which with their twenty-one barbed-wire entanglements have protected themselves from all reformist elements. But quite independently of the strength and the possible influence of the Trotskyist Opposition, it has to be evaluated and considered as an organisation which is endeavouring to spread the influence of social-reformism in the leading ranks of the working class.

All the problems on the agenda of the last Plenum were examined by the staff of the world revolution from the point of view of preparing the proletarian masses for the necessity of intensifying the struggle against attacking capital, by way of an extended attack on social-reformism, which is playing a decisive role in the work of accomplishing capitalist rationalisation at the expense of the working class and with the aid of the organisations set up by that class. In considering this question the Plenum began with the deepest confidence that the new course of social-reformism is conditioned not only by the new function which the present epoch of the rationalisation of capitalism assigns to them, but also by the presence of a leftward process among the workers, who, after a certain period of depression, are now beginning to offer resistance to attacking capital and its accomplices.

The Plenum found it necessary to give special attention to the problems of the Chinese revolution. The death sentence on the Chinese revolution was confirmed

by the Trotskyist Opposition. Meantime the Chinese revolution is showing no signs of preparing for its death. On the contrary, it is displaying exceptional liveliness, and is now preparing for new and decisive struggles. In these conditions the Communist International was called upon to make a painstaking analysis of the enormous experience accumulated by the Chinese Communist Party in the struggles which it has headed, and from that experience to draw all the necessary deductions in order to be fully equipped to carry on the struggle to a complete victory.

#### THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

The problem of the Chinese revolution and the work of defending the Chinese revolution is closely and inseparably connected with the tasks arising out of an intensified struggle against social-reformism. On February 7th, 1928, George-Baldwin in the speech from the throne at the opening of a new session of Parliament, devoted the following lines to China :

"The situation in China has so far improved as to permit large reductions in the naval and military forces sent to the Far East for the protection of my British and Indian subjects resident in the concessions, but the situation caused by internal disturbances and civil wars, and the consequent insecurity of life and property, both Chinese and foreign, still give cause for anxiety.

"In spite of these discouraging circumstances, my Government adhere to the declaration of policy published by them a year ago, as the basis on which they are prepared to meet Chinese aspirations when the Chinese can assure satisfactory protection for British lives and property."

These few lines deserve exceptional attention.



British imperialism is realising its hegemony over the eastern nations by the combination of its own military and naval forces with the efforts of the native population harnessed to the chariot of British imperialism.

The stronger British imperialism is in any part of the East, the less it has need of its own military and naval forces, and the more does it exploit native forces: holding to the principle of divide and rule. The circumstance that the British imperialists are now able to reduce their armed forces in China is only a further confirmation of the transformation of the Generals' Kuomintang into the lackey of foreign imperialism. 'The Generals' Kuomintang now fulfils those functions for British imperialism which a year ago were fulfilled by the punitive detachments composed of British forces.

But these victories of British imperialism are in no way the work purely of the British Conservatives. MacDonald and the Labour Party have full right to claim some of the laurels of victory. Just as in the sphere of the trade union struggle the social-reformists play an active role in the work of making possible the capitalist attack on "their own" proletariat, so in the sphere of international politics the social-reformists are actively assisting their imperialists in the work of oppressing the insurgent colonial and semi-colonial peoples. The imperialist role of the social-reformists is thrown into particular prominence in the struggle against the incipient new revolutionary movement in India. "His Majesty's Opposition," led by MacDonald, is not only participating in the celebrated Simon Commission, but is doing its utmost to persuade the Indian people of the necessity of subjecting itself to the will of the British imperium. The social-reformists have their members in the Simon Commission, and simultaneously another "missionary" of social-reformism, Alfred Purcell of inglorious glory,

is in India carrying on an agitation (with extremely doubtful success) against the Soviet Unions and for the same Amsterdam which threw him out of their ranks for his radical speeches in defence of the Soviet trade unions in the years preceding the consolidation of social-reformism.

But in regard to China also British social-reformism, and with it the reformism of all other countries, has played a very active role. The despatch of military and naval forces to China proved to be possible to British imperialism only *after* the defeat of the miners in their lock-out. In addition, and at the same time, the Conservative Government had need of the active support of the social-reformists in order to carry on its murderous war in China. These latter gave their support. It is extremely characteristic that MacDonald regarded it as his pleasant obligation to remark that he welcomed the lines devoted to China in George-Baldwin's speech from the throne.

Social-reformism has now turned with its "face to the East." Its task in the East consists first and foremost in assisting the imperialists in the work of smothering the colonial and semi-colonial peoples, and, secondly, in disorganising and disintegrating the revolutionary movement from within. It is for this reason that the defence of the Chinese revolution dictates the insistent necessity of strengthening the struggle against rapacious imperialism with a more severe, more resolute and more ruthless struggle against social-reformism.

#### THE POLISH ELECTIONS

The Comintern Plenum ended its work a few days before the elections in Poland. The election campaign in the country of Pilsudskyism was a summary illustration of the accuracy of the Communist International's



fundamental attitude in the matter of struggling against social-reformism. The Pilsudskyites in the Polish Socialist Party carried on a most ignominious and scurrilous struggle against the Communists and the revolutionary elements of the working class and peasantry of Poland. The terror practised by them was, as it were, a complement to the general Fascist methods of carrying through and accomplishing the "democratic" Polish election campaign. The Communist Party was forced to carry on the struggle on a secret underground basis, being subjected to the cruellest of persecution. Despite this situation of open Fascist terror, the working class of the basic industrial centres expressed their indignation with the socialist Pilsudskyites by showing their confidence in the Polish Communists. The more resolute and ruthless the struggle of the Communist International in all countries against the open servants of imperialism who continue to attire themselves in the socialist toga, the swifter and more successfully will proceed the mobilisation of the genuine revolutionary elements of the working class under the banner of Communism.

## CHAPTER TWO

## THE NEW TACTICS OF THE C.P.G.B.

THE Comintern Plenum's resolution on the British question, carried unanimously on the 18th of February last, sums up all the modifications and charges that have taken place both in regard to the correlation of forces in Britain and in the mutual relationships existing within the working class. On the basis of a clear Leninist analysis of those modifications and changes the resolution indicates a new tactical line of struggle for the Communist Party, which in effect lays down the principle that henceforth, while heading the struggle against the Conservative Government, the Communist Party must pass to an open attack on the leaders of the Labour Party, who are becoming more and more part of the apparatus of the bourgeois State.

The passing of this resolution was preceded by a discussion in the C.P.G.B., and a diligent examination of all the problems arising out of the new tactical line in the commission of the Plenum. The members of the Plenum commission came to the unanimous conclusion that the discussion on the question of the new tactic had first and foremost shown the political growth of the ranks of the Comintern in general and of the C.P.G.B. in particular. The discussion centred around the following fundamental problems: (1) the prospects of Britain's economic development; (2) the tendencies of the Labour Party's development; and (3) the slogan of a Labour Government.

During the analysis of these complex and difficult problems one could observe the extent to which the



members composing the main framework of the Comintern had mastered the Leninist methods of class analysis, and the definition of a tactical line on the basis of a considered application of the fundamental principles of Communism to the given concrete circumstances, to the given correlation of class forces.

The first problem—that of the prospects of Britain's economic development, did not lead to any special discussion in the British delegation itself. The British delegation unanimously held the view that the "prosperity" of 1927, of which British bankers and British reformists are so loud in their praises, can in no case justify a reconsideration of the general position in regard to the decline of British imperialism. The partial "prosperity" which was expressed in a certain revival in the spheres of industry and trade was resultant on the ending of the seven months' miners' lock-out, and also on the intensified pressure brought to bear on conditions of labour after the defeat of the General Strike. And the British delegation was confident that even this "prosperity" was drawing to its end. Both in the sphere of economic struggle and in that of political struggle we note symptoms of the beginning of a fresh animation among the British proletariat, and they are beginning to close their ranks for a united resistance to the attack of capital.

A sober analysis of the reality in Britain completely shatters the theory of the so-called "second industrial revolution," which is based on the comparatively favourable position of new spheres of industry. The bourgeois economists are endeavouring to draw attention from the chronic depression in the basic spheres of industry by pointing to the growth and development of the chemical, electrical, motor and a number of other new spheres of industry. There is not the least doubt that

the development of these spheres of industry is to a certain extent alleviating the results of the general economic depression. None the less, one must not forget those basic facts of British economics owing to which the development of new spheres of industry can in no case compensate for the destructive results of the decline and decay of Britain's old spheres of industry, which in their time were the basis of her economic leadership and which right down to the present day, represent the indispensable conditions of a sound functioning of British capitalism.

For a start, the basic spheres of British industry—coal, metal-working, textiles, shipbuilding, etc.—provide occupation for the majority of the British working class, while all the new spheres of industry taken together employ only about seven hundred thousand hands. If it be granted that all the seven hundred thousand hands employed in the new spheres of industry are enjoying all the benefits of the economic prosperity, even so one could speak of the satisfactory position of only an insignificant section of the British proletariat. But the correlation of these two groups of industry is by no means exhausted by a comparative relationship of the number of workers occupied in them. The chief and fundamental difference between these two spheres of industry consists in the fact that while the first works predominantly for export, without which the metropolis of the British Empire is destined to destruction, the second sphere of industry is preponderantly occupied with luxury articles supplied mainly to the internal market of the metropolis itself. And just because of this the growth of new spheres of industry against the background of a continuing and at present intensifying depression in the more important spheres of industry is rather a symptom of the further decline of British



economic life than of the beginning of a new era of flourishing economy.

#### LABOUR COLLABORATION IN THE RATIONALISATION OF BRITISH INDUSTRY

This general estimate of the economic situation does not, of course, exclude the possibility of modifications in British economy. Of course, it would be the greatest of mistakes not to take into account the fact that 1927 was a record year for "peace in industry," excelling in this regard not only the post-war years, but even the years immediately preceding the world war. The Baldwin Government in conjunction with the leaders of the Labour Party and the trade unions have taken and are taking the most heroic measures to continue this peace at all costs and to improve their position on the international market at the cost of lengthening the working day and cutting down the wages of the British workers. The British ruling classes are also making certain attempts to rationalise British industry, both with the aid of uniting scattered and unconnected enterprises and by improving and perfecting the technique of production. All these facts must be considered and weighed most diligently. But at the same time one must keep in mind the fact that the British bourgeoisie is subjected to conditions of a continually growing intensification and severity of international competition, and consequently it is necessary to study the successes of British capital and its victories in the realm of rationalisation from the point of view of the comparison of those successes with the successes of other capitalist countries, particularly of the United States and Germany.

The older British industry proved to be impotent in the presence of foreign competition even in the pre-war period. The backwardness of British technique, the

corruption of the ruling classes by a previous prolonged period of monopolist predominance gave and still give an unquestionable predominance to the newer capitalist countries. The eyes of the British ruling classes are fixed mainly on the possibility of worsening the position of the workers. The hopes of the Mondes and the Baldwins that with the aid of the Hickses and Thomases it will be possible to effect a sound stabilisation of British capitalism at the cost of the workers' interests are clearly unrealisable. If we approach the analysis of British economic life from this point of view we come naturally and inevitably to the conclusion that the talk of a "second industrial revolution" is a manifestation of that official optimism with which the economists and politicians of bourgeois Britain, and social-reformists more than anyone else, endeavour to veil the real tendencies of development in British economic life.

#### THE CHANGES IN THE LABOUR PARTY

More serious, and at the same time more lively discussions took place over the question of the tendencies of development of the Labour Party. The British Labour Government existed only nine months altogether. The life of this government, which faithfully and truly served the British bourgeoisie in their struggle against the British workers and against the peoples of the East, was put to an end by two questions which objectively had revolutionary significance; relationships with the U.S.S.R., and the question of freedom for Communist propaganda (the Campbell case). The 1924 election campaign was carried through under the sign of defence of the Labour Government against the pressure of the united bourgeois front, while it was not the Labour Party but the Conservatives who, with the celebrated Zinoviev Letter, took care to give the election campaign



the character of a severe class struggle. This peculiar feature of the election campaign towards the end of 1924 would seem to have pushed into the background and obscured the lessons to be drawn from the Labour Party's period of office, which revealed the true features of the so-called Labour Government. The first year following Baldwin's victory was also marked by extremely complex class mutual relationships, and this contributed to the encouraging of all kinds of illusions concerning the Labour Party, the trade unions and all the so-called organised Labour movement.

The movements and modifications that occurred in the Labour Party after it had become a governmental party found clear expression on May 12th, 1926 (the day of the betrayal of the General Strike) and became finally crystallised during the period that followed this ill-omened day. The fundamental mistake of the C.P.G.B. consisted in the fact that it failed to effect a timely re-estimation of all the values immediately after the betrayal of the General Strike, and to adapt its tactical line to the modifications which had taken place inside the Labour movement itself.

The Labour Ministry "governed" for a very short period. But that period was quite sufficient to show that the Labour Party was harnessed to the chariot of British imperialism. The day after Baldwin's victory, the Parliamentary Labour Party continued essentially the same policy as it had carried on during the period when MacDonald was the Premier of His Majesty's Government. In its role of opposition the Labour Party continued to fulfil the functions of a third bourgeois party, standing guard over the basic interests of imperialism and capitalism.

The Labour Party as a whole was not adapted to its leaders' new course. Right down to the Twenty-

fourth Congress of the Labour Party in October, 1924, it continued to exist as a federative party, built up on a trade union basis not only from an organisational, but also partly from a political point of view. The various sections of the Labour Party enjoyed freedom of criticism, and the decisions of the Party Congresses were respected but little either by the Labour Party leaders or by its local organisations. The 1924 Labour Party Congress took the first serious step towards transforming the Labour Party into a social-reformist party. That Congress not only passed a series of repressive measures against the Communists, but also worked out a definite political formula, directed against all forms of revolutionary struggle. By condemning the Communists and revolutionary methods of struggle MacDonald hoped to expiate his own sins, which found expression in yielding to the worker masses on the questions of relationships with the U.S.S.R. and on the Campbell case. The avid gods of British imperialism accepted MacDonald's sacrificial offerings as willingly as they later availed themselves of his services in the issue of the publication of the "Zinoviev Letter," but they continued to insist that the Moor had done his work, and the Moor must go. The work taken in hand at the London Congress had its consummation a year later, at the celebrated Liverpool Congress, when the Labour Party did in fact exclude all Communists from its composition, leaving to the latter only the possibility of remaining in the party in the capacity of trade union members.

But in 1925 also the leaders of the Labour Party displayed a certain caution. The Liverpool Congress took place after the Labour movement by its united efforts had forced the Baldwin Government to make an important concession in regard to the miners (Red Friday). In its turn Red Friday had its reflection in a series of



radical resolutions at the Trades Union Congress held at Scarborough, which Congress immediately preceded the Liverpool Congress. The leaders of the Labour Party had to take these facts into account, but they proceeded to ungird themselves immediately after the General Strike had been completely betrayed, and threw away their disguise altogether after the defeat of the miners.

#### COMMUNISTS AND THE LABOUR PARTY

After the miners' defeat there followed the union of the trade union bureaucracy with the leaders of the Labour Party, and with united efforts they began to work to transform all workers' organisations into the direct apparatus of the bourgeoisie. The co-operation of MacDonald and Baldwin in the political field corresponded to the joint conferences of the trade union bureaucracy with the employers, while this co-operation gradually evolved into the direct fusion of the machinery of the Labour movement with the machinery of the employers and the bourgeois State. For this very reason the Comintern Plenum considered it necessary to note that the Labour Party, from being a special organisation of a federative type, built up on the basis of the trade unions, is becoming more and more transformed into an ordinary social-democratic party. Out of this definition of the fundamental tendency of the Labour Party's development also arises the tactical attitude of the Communist International. In these conditions and in this situation the Communist Party cannot and must not limit itself to a struggle only against the Baldwin Government. By the very course of things, the British Communist Party is called on to intensify the struggle against the liberal-bourgeois policies of the Labour Party. It is not merely a question of severe criticism of the Labour Party, but also of carrying on a struggle

against the Labour Party as against a party which is becoming more and more transformed into a third party of the bourgeoisie.

We have already mentioned that the consideration of the British question at the Plenum was preceded by a discussion inside the C.P.G.B. A direct incentive to an extended political discussion was provided by the resolution adopted by the Ninth Congress of the C.P.G.B. In the resolution on the principal tasks of the C.P.G.B. we read :

"The principal tasks of our Party in the present period are to rally the workers for (1) the fight against the war danger ; (2) the defeat of the renewed capitalist offensive against wages ; (3) the struggle against the Baldwin Government and its replacement by a Labour Government under the control of the working class."

The struggle for the Labour Government was thus declared to be one of the fundamental tasks of the Party. The resolution proceeds to explain the formula "under the control of the working class" in the following words :

"The control of the next Labour Government by the Labour Party E.C. acting on the instructions of the special conference, and the selection of the Labour Cabinet by the Labour Party E.C."

In this formula the working class is replaced by its bureaucratic heads in the persons of former Liberals and the reactionary bureaucrats of the trade unions, who compose the majority both of the Executive Committee and of the celebrated "Labour Government."

Both these formulas taken together—the struggle for the Labour Government and the establishment of control through the Executive Committee of the Labour Party—show that the Party was essentially repeating



the old slogans in a deteriorated form, without in the least taking into account the movements which had occurred both in the relations of classes and in the mutual relations inside the working class.

This Congress was held in October, 1927. The resolution of the October Congress was subjected to careful consideration at the C.C. of the C.P.G.B. on the 7th, 8th and 9th of January, 1928. In the theses put forward by the majority of the Plenum we read :

"While it was wrong to push forward the slogan of a 'Labour Government under the control of the Labour movement' in such a form as to give the impression that it was the central slogan of our electoral policy, we still consider that in view of the fact that the Labour Party is based on the trade unions, whose members as distinct from leaders, are moving to the left, that in the event of a Labour Government being returned the slogan of the control of the Labour Government by the Labour movement would still have a certain value, though the form of control which we should advocate would be one exercised by the mass organisations of the workers and not by the bureaucracy."

In these theses, while rejecting the control of the "Labour Government" by the Executive Committee of the Labour Party, the majority of the C.C. recognises the struggle for "a Labour Government" as not being a fundamental task of the Communist Party, but at the same time recognises the slogan of a Labour Government as correct in itself.

This attitude to the Labour Government arises chiefly out of a false estimate of the Labour Party. In the theses of the January meeting of the C.C. we read that the Labour Party is "a *Federation* for Parlia-

mentary purposes of reformist political parties and trade unions." We emphasise the word "*Federation*" for we read in another section of these theses :

"The Labour Party is not a real working-class political party, but simply a stage in the development of the masses of British workers towards such a party."

Thus these theses definitely show that in maintaining the mistaken position taken up at the Ninth Congress and adopted by that Congress under their leadership, the majority of the C.C. refused to recognise the obvious fact that from the moment that the Labour Party became a governmental party it has been changing steadily into an ordinary social-democratic party, excelling even the "classic" German Social-Democratic Party both in regard to its programme—the renunciation of socialism and even of the capital levy—and in the matter of its organisational centralism—expelling not only the Communists but also the radically-thinking proletarians.

In the end the majority had to make certain adjustments in its views on the Labour Party. In the theses put forward by Gallacher, Campbell and Rust to the February Plenum of the Comintern we read :

"Despite the fact that in its organisational structure the Labour Party remains what it was when Lenin wrote on it, namely, a federation of reformist political parties and trade unions for parliamentary action, in which the trade unions have the numerical preponderance, the leaders of the Labour Party have noticeably succeeded in fastening social-democratic discipline on the Labour Party, and have in consequence taken serious steps in the direction of their objects, which consist in forestalling the development of the Labour Party into a class organisation and



in transforming it into a bourgeois party, into a third party of the capitalist class."

#### DIVERGENCE OF VIEWS IN THE E.C. OF THE C.P.G.B.

The theses of the majority of the C.C. met with strong opposition at the January meeting of the C.C. already mentioned. The representatives of the minority quite justly pointed to the fact that the features of the British Labour movement had radically changed, and that any attempt to avoid a political and tactical stock-taking of the movements which had occurred would entail a growth of reformist bureaucracy and a weakening of the role and significance of the Communist Party. It insisted that the Party must direct all its forces in a widely developed attack on the Labour Party, unmasking its real nature, as a party no longer confining itself to the role of lackey in relation to the ruling classes, but actively striving to transform all the organisations of the Labour movement into the direct agents of capital.

At the same time it has to be recognised that there was not complete unity even in the ranks of the minority. The mighty pressure brought to bear on the C.P. by united capital in alliance with the social-reformists has caused some confusion in its ranks. This confusion was manifested in the theses presented to the C.C. Plenum by comrade Murphy. The latter made a sound analysis of the development of the Labour Party and of the differentiation inside the Labour movement. But he assumed that it was necessary to counterpose the Labour Party not with the Communist Party as such, but with a new revolutionary Labour Party, which should unite the Communist Party and the healthy left elements of the trade unions and the Labour Party.

The Plenum of the Comintern were supplied not only with comrade Murphy's theses but also with those

drawn up by comrades Dutt and Pollitt. These theses contain not only a precise criticism of the fundamental mistakes in the theses put forward by the majority of the C.C., but also a new tactical line which completely and soundly estimates the main movements and modifications that have taken place in the disposition of class forces in Britain. However, the Plenum did not regard it as possible to agree with certain deductions made in these theses, in particular the conclusions reached on the question of the struggle for admittance into the Labour Party.

But neither was there complete unity even in the ranks of the majority of the C.C. The leader of the Scottish miners, comrade Allen, who voted with the majority, declared in his speech: "Among the comrades with whom I work there exists strong feeling that it is necessary to act more swiftly and sharply than we have acted hitherto. The Party must come out openly, and, instead of humbly receiving the blows and attacks to which we are subjected, we should answer blow for blow." Comrade Hannington, the leader of the unemployed movement, who also voted with the majority, insisted that we must change our whole tactic, and in particular our election tactics, explaining that all our proposals for a united front with the Labour Party, which merely end in our giving them our votes, are demonstrably fruitless.

We have mentioned only two comrades of the majority, but we could give other examples also. One has only to turn over the pages of the last few numbers of the "Labour Monthly" and "The Communist" to be convinced that the representatives of the majority also felt and admitted the artificiality of their arguments in defence of the old tactic and the old slogans. From this viewpoint the "Open Letter" of the C.C. of the



C.P.G.B. to all members of the Party (26th January, 1928) deserves special attention. In this letter it is said directly that "failure to keep abreast of the class struggle might express itself in failure to realise that slogans which were correct and timely in 1924, 1925, and the first four months of 1926 (up to the General Strike) are now out of date, and may become a retarding instead of a progressive factor in the movement." In the same "Open Letter" the C.C. of the C.P.G.B. quite soundly sums up the results of the fourteen months after the end of the miners' lock-out, establishing that only in those cases where the Party applied the new tactical line, based on the mobilisation of the masses against the reformist leaders, has its campaign been completely successful. The weakness of the "Open Letter" consists in the fact that it starts from the false estimation of the Labour Party and of the Labour Government slogan formulated in the theses of the majority.

#### AGREEING ON A LINE

From this brief survey it is obvious that the British Communist Party was prepared for the task, jointly with the entire Communist International, of putting an end to the chaos, and indicating a definite tactical line which would be in complete accord with the conditions of the class struggle in Britain. We find this new tactical line in the resolution adopted unanimously first by the whole delegation—majority and minority—of the C.P.G.B. at the Plenum, and then by the entire Plenum of the C.C. of the Comintern (at the session of 18th February).

The severest issues in the discussion were the questions of the Labour Government and the Labour Party.

The majority of the C.C. at first thought that it was necessary to confine the Party merely to making a number of adjustments to the slogan of the Labour

Government, but that there was no justification for re-considering Lenin's counsel on the necessity of pushing the Labour Party into power. But as soon as they began to look for the adjustments they saw that the slogan itself was out of date, that in the present circumstances it is not a slogan mobilising the masses but one that puts obstacles in the way of releasing the revolutionary energy of the British proletariat. The chief modifications that had occurred since 1920, when Lenin gave his advice on the question of the Labour Government, were precisely formulated in clause 11 of the Plenum resolution, and we therefore quote it in its entirety:

"Under no circumstances can the present situation be compared with the situation which existed in 1918-1920, when Lenin insisted on supporting the Labour Party and pushing it into power. In 1918-1920 a Labour Party Government could have played the role of the Kerensky Government with all its vacillations. Nor can the present situation be compared with that of 1922-23, when the Labour Party included in its programme demands which were strongly resisted by the capitalist class (the capital levy, unemployment, Russia). No comparison can be made with the situation in 1924 when the Government was forced to resign on two objectively revolutionary issues. A Labour Government at the present juncture will from the very outset be an obvious instrument for attacking the workers. The experience of the MacDonald Government, the betrayal of the General Strike and the miners' struggle, the changed attitude of the Labour Party and trade union leaders towards the war issue and relations with the U.S.S.R., China, India and Egypt, their changed attitude on the



principal domestic issues (rationalisation, the anti-Trade Union Act, industrial peace)—all this renders it necessary for the British Communist Party to come out more boldly and definitely as an independent political party, to change its position in regard to the Labour Party and the 'Labour Government,' and consequently to replace the slogan of a 'Labour Government' by that of the 'Revolutionary Workers' Government.' "

We have already cited an extract from the preliminary draft of theses presented by comrades Campbell, Gallacher and Rust. From these theses it is obvious that the representatives of the majority also are taking into account the successes of the bourgeois-Liberal bureaucracy of the Labour Party in their work of transforming the latter into a "third bourgeois party." In other documents issued by the majority we can find a more precise characterisation of this process. We find the Plenum's formula on the question of the Labour Party in clause 4 of the resolution adopted, which notes both the peculiar organisational structure of the Labour Party and the fundamental political tendency of its development. In this clause we read :

"This consolidation of the capitalist bourgeoisie and of reformism is accomplished by a development of the struggle between the right-wing and the revolutionary workers, which is taking the form of a heavy attack by the Labour Party and trade union leaders on the left elements of the Labour movement, particularly on the Communist Party, the sole revolutionary party of the proletariat. From a federal organisation, built up on the basis of the trade unions, the Labour Party is becoming to an increasing degree an ordinary social-democratic party, beginning more and more

ruthlessly to expel from its midst even Communists and left-wing workers who represent the trade unions; the leaders of the trade unions in their turn are steadily developing a systematic attack on the Minority Movement, the Communist Party, and are pursuing a policy of victimising Communists and trying to break connections between the Communists and the proletarian masses."

From the characterisation of the political tendency of the Labour Party on the one hand, and the essential nature of a "Labour Government" on the other it inevitably and inexorably arises that the Communist Party cannot and must not confine itself to the struggle against only one camp of the bourgeoisie, against the Baldwin Government, but must intensify the struggle against the open bourgeois reaction by a developed mass attack on the Labour Party, which is becoming more and more a third bourgeois party, endeavouring in its own fashion and with its own methods to save British imperialism from decline and disintegration.

#### THE ELECTION POLICY OF THE C.P.G.B.

A further part of the general tactical line is the question of the C.P.G.B.'s election tactics. The strength of the Communist Party has consisted, and still does consist, in its close and indissoluble connections with the masses. It is for this reason that certain of its campaigns have been so successful despite the fact that the Party either theoretically or politically insufficiently clearly comprehended all the political modifications that have taken place in Britain since the General Strike. But the source of the British Communist Party's strength is at present being transformed into a source of its weakness. British Communists know very



well that the hatred for the Baldwin Government, who smashed the General Strike and the miners' struggle, and passed a number of dragooning measures against the British Labour movement, will be transformed into a passionate endeavour to replace that Government by another. The British proletariat, educated as they are in bourgeois traditions of parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy, naturally regard the Labour Government as the sole possible alternative to the Hard-Face Government. And for this very reason the majority of the leaders of the C.P.G.B. approached the question of election tactics with extra caution. They were afraid that a tactic which could in one form or another be interpreted as a diminution of votes for the Labour Party would not be understood even by those workers who now admit the treacherous character of the Labour Party leadership, yet who still hope that by some means or other it is still possible to correct the Labour Party line. We are hardly likely to err in saying that it was this conception which led to the line of a critical support of the Labour Party being adopted by a majority at the January meeting of the C.C.

The Plenum of the Comintern C.C. submitted this issue to the most painstaking analysis. In the course of the discussion it was established that the C.C. of the British Communist Party had long before taken stock of C.C. of the British Communist Party had taken stock of the results of a number of bye-election campaigns held during the past year, and on that basis had come to the conclusion that the Labour Party was losing votes actually in the most important industrial centres,\* and

\* After a considerable delay MacDonald himself has been forced to admit the "failure" of the Labour Party in the 1927 campaigns, but, of course, he prefers to explain that failure by the financial, and not by the political, weaknesses of the party. (See "Daily Herald.")

that only in the one case where the standard-bearer of the Labour Party had been a candidate standing for a united front with the Communists and rejecting MacDonald's line had the Labour Party enjoyed any success. In other words, even the actual election practice shows that the Communist Party must put forward not only its own slogans, but also its own candidates in order to mobilise and unite those workers who are turning more and more from the bourgeois leadership, but who do not at present get the possibility of expressing their tendencies and desires in the election campaigns. And for this very reason, even before the Plenum the Communist Party had raised the practical question of the introduction of such an election campaign as would ensure the establishment of an independent Communist fraction in the British Parliament. But the majority of the Communist Party considered that their election tactic should be introduced in such a fashion as to ensure that in no circumstances would the workers' votes be split in those areas where as the result of such a split the old bourgeois Liberal and Conservative Parties might obtain the victory. However, a critical analysis of this principle showed that its application would in effect entail the refusal of the Communist Party to put forward its candidates in the most important industrial areas. And for this reason the Comintern Plenum resolution definitely emphasised that the "Communist Party will strive to put forward the *maximum* [my italics.—P. B.] number of independent Communist candidates," and added that "it is absolutely necessary to put forward candidates in opposition to the leaders of the Labour Party and the General Council."

Of course, the Plenum did not confine itself to these general instructions; it outlined a practical scheme of election tactics for the C.P.G.B. The entire scheme



starts from the fundamental assumption that in its election struggle the Communist Party will regard the Labour Party not as the God-given, sole representative of the organised proletariat in Britain, but as the organised betrayal of the interests of the British working class.

#### SOME ASPECTS OF THE NEW POLICY

The British resolution embodies the general outlook of the Communist International on the question of a developed attack against social-reformism, which not only in Britain, but in all other capitalist countries is openly fulfilling the function of acting as the chief machinery of the ruling classes in the work of stabilising capitalism at the expense of the interests of the proletariat, and with the aid of organisations created by the working class. The value of the British resolution consists in the very fact that it succeeds in applying this general viewpoint to the extremely complex and extremely confused concrete situation of the class struggle in Britain.

The application of the new tactic will be accompanied by great difficulties in Britain, where the leaders of the Labour Party, and in particular their left-wing lackeys, will endeavour to present our tactic as a disruptive tactic. The editor of the "Daily Herald," the renegade Mellor, has already made the first move in this direction\* the insincerity of our "noisy" talk of the united front. There are still many workers to be found in Britain who will be caught by this. It goes without saying that it would be a fatal mistake to under-rate the importance of these difficulties. But it would be a still greater error by declaring the resolution of the Plenum a proof of

\* It is extremely characteristic that we can observe a united front of the openly bourgeois press with that of the social-reformists even in regard to the Comintern resolution.

to under-estimate the political importance of the new tactic from the point of view of the mobilisation of the active nucleus of the working class, which in all countries, including Britain, is beginning to recognise the true significance of the reformists' policies both in regard to questions of so-called high politics, and in regard to the every-day needs of the proletariat: wages, hours and so on.

During the last few years the British proletariat has continued to regard the Labour Party as the all-embracing party of the entire working class. The persecution and expulsion of the Communists were by many workers regarded as a temporary evil. The change by the Communist Party to an open attack on the Labour Party will be considered by these workers as a breaking up of the instrument created by the working class for the defence of proletarian interests. These feelings of the middle section of workers will be most ruthlessly exploited by the Liberal agents of the Labour Party, who received their education in the old British Liberal Party, which had a perfect mastery of the art of pulling the wool over the eyes of the working masses. It is, of course, not unlikely that these charlatans will have some temporary success. None the less it is unquestionable that the adoption by the Communist Party of a precise tactic in regard to the Labour Party will force the workers to take a more serious and more critical attitude to the deeds, or rather the misdeeds, of the Thomases and Lansburys, the MacDonalds and the Hickses.

There is no necessity to point out that the new tactic does not in the least mean a rejection of the united front. All the examples cited above of the application of the new tactic by the C.P.G.B. show that the C.P.G.B. has not only preached the united front, but has skilfully



realised it. Was the First of May demonstration not a triumph for the united front? For in that demonstration, side by side with the Communist Party, participated not only trade unions, but local organisations of the Labour Party itself. The same thing applies to the miners' march on London. In that march participated miner members of the Labour Party, and throughout the whole route of the march the marchers were welcomed by the most varied proletarian organisations. The new tactic consists only in proposing the realisation of the united front from below despite the will of the leaders who are striving to subject the workers' organisations to the bourgeois State. In opposition to the leaders of the Labour Party and the trade unions, who are actually realising a united front with the employers and with the bourgeois State, the Communist Party will set up a widely developed mass united front of the proletariat against capital and its social-reformist allies.

The C.P.G.B.'s new tactic arises not only out of the intensification of the class struggle in Britain, but also out of the increase in severity of the process of differentiation within the working class itself. Right down to the present time the reformist-bureaucratic leaders of the Labour Party and the trade unions have the insolence and impertinence to put themselves forward as the representatives of the entire working class. The C.P.G.B.'s new tactic includes a challenge to those leaders. It reveals those leaders to be not the representatives of the working class but organised traitors to the interests of the proletariat. It goes without saying that this new tactic will demand not only audacity and boldness but intelligent manœuvring on the part of the Communist Party of Great Britain. The task of the C.P.G.B. in the struggle against the policies of the Labour Party will consist in wresting away from it

those healthy proletarian ranks which still continue to follow it.

That struggle will be stubborn and intense. The strength of the new tactic consists in the very fact that it counts on the mobilisation and the organisation of those proletarian masses whose interests are being betrayed in the most cruel fashion by the bureaucratic leaders at every stage and in all spheres of the class struggle being waged by the British proletariat.



### CHAPTER THREE

## THE CHARTER OF SOCIAL-REFORMISM AND THE FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY

OVERTHROWN according to all the rules of bourgeois-democratic parliamentarism, Poincaré-la-guerre remains at the head of government in France, riding roughshod over the heroes of the left-wing bloc who crowed so loudly over their victory on May 11th, 1924. And Poincaré is thoroughly justified in mocking at his former opponents. In order to save themselves from the MacDonald Government the British bourgeoisie had to resort to the "Zinoviev Letter" forgery and to a greatly intensified election campaign. But the French bourgeoisie managed to achieve their object without resort to new elections. To the vanquished Poincaré it handed the portfolio of Premier, while the victorious Herriot it relegated to the role of—chain-horse to Poincaré's chariot.

The ignominious defeat of the left bloc is the political expression of those economic movements which have taken place in post-war France. In France the years following the war were characterised by swift industrialisation and extensive economic development. Petty-bourgeois peasant France was, with the speed of lightning, transformed into a mighty capitalist power, representing an enormous force on the international stage. This period of industrialisation of the country was marked by the emergence, consolidation and development of mighty organisations of industrial and financial capital, which were the actual arbiters of the destinies of the country, and took little count of the will of

parliament and the parliamentary parties. The leaders of the banks and of heavy industry were fully conscious of the fact that despite their holding the strategic points of the real power in their hands, they would have to exert no little effort in order to overcome the political mosaic of parties which had been born and had developed in old, petty-bourgeois France. The directors of the trusts and the banks are working with minute detail at the task of establishing a harmony between the political superstructure and the new economic basis in France. Their slogan is "Strong Government." By "strong government" they have in mind the consolidation and union of the scattered and disintegrated political organisations into a single bourgeois political party, to which they can completely entrust the political representation of their interests. The disintegration and disposition of the left bloc has to be regarded as an important achievement in this direction on the part of giant capital. However, taking into account the power of tradition, the masters of modern France are temporarily limiting themselves to the realisation of so-called "national union." Applying our terminology to the manoeuvres of the French bourgeoisie, we can say that they are putting into practice a united bourgeois front, regarding it as a transition stage to organic political unity.

### POINCARÉ'S TASK

To this united bourgeois front, called "national union," and headed by Poincaré, has fallen the task of realising the stabilisation of the franc and of beginning the work of rationalising French industry, in order to assure France a corresponding position on the great road of imperialistic spoliation. The Poincaré Government has not restricted itself to unseating the victor of May 11th from his saddle. It has taken all necessary



measures in order to *exploit* the vanquished for the task of the "restoration" of French economy. To this end the leader of the "victorious" left cartel, Herriot, was included in the Cabinet of "national union." As for the socialists and the trade union social-reformists, the Poincaré Government also adopted all necessary measures in order that they, as well as their colleagues in other countries, should fulfil the function of agents to the bourgeoisie in the work of rationalising capitalism. Poincaré met with practically no resistance whatever from the social-reformists. On the contrary, both the Socialist Party and the reformist Confederation of Labour joyfully clutched at the possibility of participating in the "great work" of consolidating French capitalism. The misfortune of these social-reformists consisted only in the fact that in the political sphere they met with the energetic counteraction of the French Communist Party, and in the trade union sphere with that of the revolutionary Confederation of Labour. In order to lighten the work of the social-reformists Poincaré undertook a crusade against the Communist Party and the revolutionary trade unions, in order that Leon Blum and Jouhaux might represent themselves as the sole representatives of the French proletariat.

#### THE PROGRAMME OF THE FRENCH SOCIAL-REFORMISTS

In their service to capitalist rationalisation the French reformists not only compete successfully with their German and British colleagues, but in certain regards they play the role of daring pioneers. Through one of the leaders—Paul Boncour—the French Socialist Party has taken direct participation in the drawing up of the dragooning measure of the military law, the point of which is directed against the organisations of the working class generally, and against the trade unions

in particular. Through Paul Boncour the French Socialist Party has set its seal to a law which has as its direct aim the preparation of France for fresh imperialist wars for the partitioning of the earth. As for the reformist Confederation of Labour, it has by no means limited itself to the work of transforming the trade union machinery into State apparatus, but has drawn up a charter of social-rationalisation which contains the general principles of a programme and tactics not only for the French reformists, but for social-reformism on a world scale.

The Jouhaux charter was published in the organ of French social-reformism, "Le Peuple," on November 15th last year. It has a "modest" title: "The Programme of the General Confederation of Labour." In order to direct the attention of the proletariat to this programme, the reformist newspaper furnished it with a series of striking sub-heads: "Resolute action necessary," "We must not restrict ourselves to partial measures," "Profound transformations are indispensable."

We must consider this pompous programme in rather more detail. Even in its introductory section its authors sound the warning that:

*"While not in the least renouncing the ideal of emancipation and justice, which will give the world of Labour that place which it deserves, faithful to the view which never separates the defence of the interests of the workers from the preservation of the interests of the community, the General Confederation of Labour formulates its minimum demands and proposes the solution of the most pressing tasks."*

So it is not possible to separate the defence of the workers' interests from the preservation of the interests of the capitalist community. From this introduction



alone one can get an adequate general conception of the basis of the French reformists' programme. But this time the French social-reformists have not restricted themselves to general declarations. They have had the courage to call things by their right names, although they decorated these unpleasant things with fine phrases from the old and long-forgotten lexicon of the pre-war Jouhaux :

*"The General Confederation of Labour,"* we read further in this programme, *"considers that the capital problem remains always the restoration of the country to a normal condition of its economy. It [the Confederation] demands to-day, as it did yesterday, a financial stabilisation, which alone can put an end to the manoeuvres of depression and speculation which enhance the cost of living. The stabilisation which has actually been realised is unstable. It should be put on a legal basis as soon as possible if we desire by way of a productive, regular and agreed activity to achieve a genuine restoration, which will assist the growth in wealth of individuals and of the community."*

Poincaré himself could not write better, of course. The whole task of the entire "National Union" consists in that same "increase of the income of the individuals and the community." And it goes without saying that Poincaré hardly had need of Jouhaux's own paraphrase of the programme which he not merely outlined but is realising. It is a secret to no one in France that the question of legalising the stabilised franc is a matter of the immediate future. It is delayed only in connection with the forthcoming elections. Among all the other arguments in Poincaré's favour the "National Union" is keeping in reserve the special argument that Poincaré, who began the work of stabilising the franc, should be allowed to carry it to a satisfactory close. It

is clear then that this is not the essence of the programme. And in order to justify his right to existence, to the above-mentioned programme of stabilisation in the name of increasing the income of "individuals and the community," Jouhaux annexes : "To this reorganisation of production and distribution the Labour movement is prepared to give its co-operation." But from the point of view of the needs of capitalist rationalisation Poincaré can hardly be satisfied by a simple promise of co-operation. The question of the forms of co-operation now has a decisive importance. Jouhaux knows this, and adds that it is necessary "To adapt the workers and their organisations to the introduction of the new technique."

Even Jouhaux did not have the audacity to expound his programme as a whole all at once. He presents it in sections. He first speaks of co-operation, then of the adaptation of the workers and their organisations to the perfecting of technique, and finally categorically declares that the General Confederation of Labour accepts "the idea of rationalisation in the general interests." Jouhaux merely adds that the "world of Labour" would like to be safeguarded against the "first possible results" of rationalisation. And he requests a speedier introduction of a law for workers' insurance against unemployment.

We thus obtain a precise programme of co-operation with capital for the purpose of rationalisation, and a programme invested with a definite form. The only question left outstanding is that of the methods of the organisational realisation of this programme. And in the same charter Jouhaux proposes to extend the role and the programme of the National Economic Council, which was established for the very purpose of carrying out the work of rationalisation. There is no need to add



that the Jouhaux charter foresees the replacing of strikes by the obligatory settlement of economic conflicts by arbitration courts.

#### THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE SOCIAL-REFORMISTS.

This new ideological and organisational view of social-reformism demands of itself a corresponding modification of tactics from the French Communist Party and the revolutionary trade unions in France. In 1924 the French socialists and the reformist trade union leaders could still put themselves forward as the representatives of organisations defending the every-day interests of the workers. But now the picture has been radically changed. The Socialist Party is carrying through the law for the militarisation of France, and the French Confederation of Labour is occupying itself with the transformation of the proletarian organisations into parts of the apparatus of capitalist rationalisation. In these conditions the Communist Party is obliged to intensify its struggle against social-reformism and to unmask the latter's role in the work of active assistance to the "National Union."

Modifications in the disposition of class forces have taken place more swiftly and severely in France than in Britain. At the same time it must be realised that the French Communist Party has not succeeded in reacting sufficiently swiftly to the modifications which have occurred or in correspondingly sharpening their tactics. Only in November of last year, *i.e.*, after the French socialists and reformists had, over a long period of time, actively assisted Poincaré, did the French Communist Party take action with an "Open Letter," in which it indicates its new tactical line of action. The weakness of this letter consists in the fact that it was noticeably out of date. In the class war, as in any other war, the

tempo plays a decisive role. The situation in France was favourable to the French Communist Party's taking the initiative in the mobilisation of the masses for the struggle against the national union and its social-reformist accomplices. M. Jouhaux can talk as much as he likes about the "world of Labour," but he knows very well that the French Confederation of Labour unites the organised workers in France to a much smaller degree than do the German or the British trade unions. The strength of the French Communist Party consists just in the fact that it is a *mass* party, based on the revolutionary proletariat of Paris and of its industrial suburbs. Poincaré's coming to power and the swift re-arming of the social-reformists, who hastened to the aid of the saviour of the French economic system, should have served as the signal for a wide mass advance on the part of the workers under the leadership of the Communist Party. That moment was allowed to pass.

On the other hand, it has to be noted that the strength of the November "Open Letter" of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party consists in the fact that it contains a bold and open criticism of the fundamental errors committed by the French Communist Party. It is for that reason that the "Open Letter" has to be regarded as the first important step on the road to the modification of the French Communist Party's tactics.

The "Open Letter" subjects the election tactics of the French Communist Party to a critical analysis. France has long been the country of classic parliamentary charlatanry. The entire system of elections is adapted to those morals and traditions which were built up in old petty-bourgeois France with its abundance of parties, of which many call themselves socialist in one form or another. In accordance with the French



electoral system the whole electoral process is divided into two parts. In the first ballot each party, group and grouping, puts forward its own candidates. Those who receive an absolute majority of the votes cast are declared elected. But if no one receives an absolute majority a second ballot is held, in which the rule is that only those parties and groups participate who have received sufficient support at the first ballot. This electoral system provides an excellent basis for all kinds of electoral agreements, coalitions and blocs, the fundamental aim of which consists in concealing the actual existence of the struggle between the classes from the great mass of voters.

Right down to 1924 in the second ballot the Communist Party gave its votes to those socialists and "left" candidates who had received a relative majority in the first ballot, while in their turn the "left" parties gave their second ballots to Communists if the latter had obtained an advantage in the first ballot. It is hardly necessary to point out that such a system of sometimes tacit, and occasionally open, agreements played chiefly into the hands of the social-reformists of various tints, who represent themselves as fighters for "democracy" against reaction. This system would be particularly injurious under present conditions, when the government of the "National Union," supported by the social-reformists, is carrying out a severe and definite policy for the rationalisation of capitalism at the expense of proletarian interests. The "Open Letter" of the French Communist Party indicates a new election tactic, which is formulated as follows:

"The pre-election tactic of the Communist Party must be defined by the proletarian formula, 'Class against class,' which has to be opposed to the slogans of the socialists and radicals. The

Central Committee (1) proposes that all organisations of the Party should unswervingly oppose their own candidates to those of the bourgeois parties both during the first and during the second ballots, and that the voting of Communists for radicals against the rights should not be permitted; (2) it immediately proposes to the socialist parties that in the second ballot a Labour bloc shall be formed in order to give support to the socialists or the Communists against all the bourgeois candidates, and a reciprocal withdrawal in favour of the (socialist or Communist) candidate who has the greater chance of success in the election, on the condition that the Socialist Party accepts the minimum programme of Labour demands; (3) it declares that if the Socialist Party rejects the proposal for the organisation of a Labour bloc the Communist Party will reserve itself the right to support proletarian candidates, despite the socialist leaders, who are working in favour of the counter-revolution and declaring themselves the defenders of bourgeois democracy against the Communists."

This new tactic caused a commotion in the socialist camp, for they had firmly believed and hoped that despite their stubborn and systematic betrayal of the interests of the workers and the great toiling masses, they would still receive the votes of the Communists in the forthcoming election campaign on the basis of the old parliamentary traditions. But the way in which the social-reformists are gnashing their teeth is a convincing proof of the accuracy of the new course which is indicated in the election tactics of the French Communist Party.

It goes without saying that the "Open Letter" is



by no means restricted to questions of election tactics. On the contrary, it clearly and unequivocally appraises the election tactic as part of the Communist Party's general tactic. And just as the French Communist Party considers that the fundamental slogan of the election campaign must be that of "Class against class," so, too, it makes this slogan the basis of all their other tactical measures.

The "Open Letter" raised the question of the new tactics for the extensive consideration of the members of the Party. The task of this document consisted in opening an attack on the parliamentary illusions which exist not only among the workers, but even among workers attached to the French Communist Party. The struggle against these illusions is a difficult and complex task in French conditions. The "Open Letter" was only the first step towards the settlement of this task. It displayed the weak and the strong sides of the French Communist Party. The Paris organisation of the Communist Party not only joyously caught at the new tactic proclaimed in the "Open Letter," but demanded the introduction of greater precision in the Communist Party's line and of a more severe direction of this line against the social-reformists. On the other hand, in the south, where the tradition of social-reformism is stronger, and where the Socialist Party still has the majority of organised workers at its disposition, the Communist organisations displayed extreme reserve towards the new tactic in general, and towards the election tactics in particular.

#### COMMUNIST ELECTION TACTICS

The struggle between various tendencies inside the French Communist Party over the question of the new tactic was settled at the National Conference of the Com-

munist Party, which took place in January this year. The chief service of this conference consisted in its subjecting all the economic and political movements which had taken place in France during the leadership of the "National Union" to a painstaking analysis, and in its clear formulation of the inevitable tactical deductions. In order to give the reader a correct understanding of the general trend of the chief resolutions we deal first with the formulation of the conference resolution on the Party's election tactic.

The resolution appraises the election tactic as "part of the struggle which the working class must carry on under the banner of the Communist Party, the sole revolutionary Party of the working class, in alliance with the peasant masses against the national union and its socialist and reformist accomplices." Starting from this pre-requisite, the conference formulated the following principles :

- (1) In the first ballot the Party will enter the struggle with its Communist programme in all the electoral regions.
- (2) In the second ballot the Party will put forward its candidates against all the bourgeois candidates and also against the socialist candidates who have turned down our proposal for a workers' and peasants' bloc.
- (3) Our attitude to socialists cannot be dependent on their attitude to the "reactionary" candidates, since the "national union" abolishes the formal lines of demarcation which existed between reactionaries and "left-wingers."
- (4) If the Central Committee considers it necessary to make certain exceptions in certain cases, it will put its concrete proposals before the Com-



munist International, which shall consider them jointly with the C.C.

This last point must not be regarded as a concession to those who would desire at all costs to continue the old line of agreement with the socialists in the struggle against the open reactionaries. The conference of the French Communist Party started from the viewpoint that in certain factory and workshop areas where the socialists still have a majority at their disposition the Communist Party should reserve itself a certain freedom to manoeuvre. At the same time the conference clearly emphasised that it can be only a question of exceptions in individual cases, while the question of these exceptions must be decided jointly with the Communist International. All these measures taken together are a guarantee that the exceptions will in no case be transformed into the rule and will not break the general tactical line laid down by the French Communist Party.

The tactical line in the sphere of the election campaign is in full correspondence with the basic slogans formulated by the January conference. Those slogans are :

- (1) Against the "national union" and the consequences of its policy for the working class.
- (2) Against the socialist and reformist leaders who play into the hands of reaction by supporting the "national union."
- (3) Against the sham of bourgeois democracy.
- (4) Against the danger of imperialist wars and pacifist illusions.
- (5) In defence of the U.S.S.R. and the Chinese revolution.
- (6) For the workers' and peasants' government.

In adopting these resolutions, the conference began with a correct estimate of the present position in France, which consists in the intensification of the class struggle and in the clear role of the social-reformists as direct agents, who under the cover of left-socialist phrases are accomplishing capitalist rationalisation. And the conference noted with absolute justice that "rationalisation is not a problem only of industrial technique—it includes a complete plan for the advance of giant capital with a view to the settlement of the crisis at the cost of the proletariat and the colonial peoples." The resolution further emphasises that rationalisation has already manifested its effects in an intensification of the exploitation of the workers, which is being effected by the "strong" government of "national union."

We also find an answer to the question of the direction of the movement within the proletarian masses in the conference resolutions. The conference began with the indubitable and evident fact of a movement leftward among the French workers, which is accompanied by just as strong a movement rightward on the part of the reformist and socialist leaders. The role of the reformists, in France as in all other countries of capitalist rationalisation, amounts to restraining and if necessary tying the hands of the proletariat, raised to begin a struggle. Naturally the task of the Communist Party consists in unbinding the revolutionary energy of the proletarian masses, in mobilising that energy and directing it into the struggle against the capitalist attack.

#### THE COMINTERN AND THE FRENCH POLICY

The Comintern Plenum set to work on the consideration of the French problem after the National Conference had laid down its tactical line. The Comintern Plenum approved of both the "Open Letter" and the



decisions of the Party conference. In the Plenum resolution on the French question we read: "The Executive Committee assumes that the 'Open Letter' and the decisions of the Party Conference [the reference is to the November letter and the January conference] are the starting points and the pre-requisites for a correction of the Party's line." It would appear that under such conditions there were no reasons for a special consideration of the French question. Certain French comrades did assume that it was necessary to consider the questions connected with the tactics of the French Communist Party as satisfactorily settled, and that there was no necessity for further study and for further straightening of the French Communist Party's tactical line. However, the Plenum did not agree with this point of view. The Plenum considered it necessary straightway to note the fact that "in the interval between the 'Open Letter' and the All-National Conference further errors similar to the former have been committed: an inaccurate estimate by the organ 'L'Humanité' of the Christmas Socialist Congress, an unsound application of the United Front, an inadequate dissociation of our Party from the Socialist Party, the proclamation issued by the Deputies and the Party after the abrogation of parliamentary immunity and the confiscation of 'Humanité' . . ." and so on. It goes without saying that the Plenum could not ignore these errors. Nor could it restrict itself to their simple enunciation. At all costs it was necessary to understand the nature of those errors and to take actual measures for their eradication.

On comparing the situation in France with that obtaining in Britain we see that the British Communist Party has sometimes applied a correct tactical line despite the fact that it had not renounced the old tactic

and the old slogans, while the French Party continued to apply the old tactic even after they had solemnly recognised its unsuitability. The reason for this lies in the fact that in essence the new line became the property of only part of the Party, and not of the Party as a whole. The Party responded but poorly to the call of the November "Open Letter" to hold a thorough discussion on all the questions connected with the new tactics. On the other hand, these same errors show that the old parliamentary illusions still possess a considerable vitality in the ranks of the Communist Party, and consequently a more resolute and more energetic struggle against them is necessary. The Plenum's task on the French question consisted not so much in getting an exact formulation of the new tasks as in getting the new tactical line into being and getting its universal application. For this reason the resolution of the Comintern Plenum emphasises the necessity for a "systematic application of the new line," and proposes that the Central Committee of the French Communist Party should "take all the necessary organisational measures and guarantee their application by the whole Party, in particular by the organ 'Humanité.'" As though in recapitulation of this instruction, the Plenum resolution continues: "Not only the leadership of the Party and its organ, but the entire Party, directed by the Central Committee, must take measures to correct the Party line."

The Comintern Plenum considered the tactics of the French Communist Party on the eve of the new elections. This circumstance explains the fact that while the British resolution proposes that the British Communist Party should carry on a wide discussion on the question of the new tactical line, the French resolution notes that the present moment is very unfavourable for



a discussion and that the Party must enter the election campaign with completely closed ranks, and ensure that despite the endeavours of the parliamentary charlatans that election campaign will assist not in an obscuring but in an elucidation of class-consciousness. The Comintern Plenum's resolution emphasises that "the election campaign is not a fact of secondary political importance, it is extraordinarily important from the political point of view, and the Party must give it particular attention in the next few weeks, adapting it to the new political line and linking it with the economic struggle of the working class and with the struggle against the results of rationalisation." And further we read in the resolution: "It [the election campaign] will be a test for the whole Party, which will thus show how far it has corrected its errors."

#### CARRYING OUT THE NEW TACTIC

And the French Communist Party has to carry through its new tactic in extraordinarily difficult circumstances. The French bourgeoisie has completely thrown off its democratic masks and is carrying on the cruellest of repression both of the Communist Party and of the revolutionary trade unions. The leaders of the Party and of the trade unions are having persecutions showered upon them lavishly. Every week brings fresh news of harsh sentences on Communists, which sentences have as their function not only the "democratic" preparation for the forthcoming elections, but first and foremost the removal of the genuine leaders and organisers of the revolutionary movement of the French proletariat, for the purpose of effecting a "painless" realisation of the capitalist attack.

In the work of fighting the Communists, as in all its other measures, the Poincaré Government is exploit-

ing the active, although not always open, support of the socialists and the trade union reformists. Immediately after the parliamentary "revolution," after which followed the formation of the government of national union, the French socialists quite openly spoke of the role they had played in regard to the government of the left bloc. No other than Leon Blum told us in the "Populaire" that the socialists had not participated in the "left" governments only in order to give friendly support to the parliamentary and governmental combinations of Herriot and his adherents. And Blum explained further that the direct participation of the socialists in the government would have aroused the dissatisfaction of the active proletarian elements inside the Socialist Party. In order to pull the wool over the eyes of these honest proletarians the leaders of the Socialist Party invented the formula "support without participation." The socialists' present formula is distinguished by yet greater craftiness. They are supporting Poincaré while representing themselves as the opposition. In the conditions of parliamentary fever they are counting on this opposition game assisting them to represent themselves as the defenders of the proletariat, democracy and progress, or, to use Jouhaux's words, "of freedom and justice," in the struggle against reaction. On the other hand, the socialists are already representing the new tactic of the French Communist Party as a tactic which plays into the hands of reaction. It would be a fatal mistake to discount the possible role of the manoeuvres of the Socialist Party in the forthcoming election campaign. But for the French Communist Party and for the entire Communist International the value of the new tactic consists not in its assistance in winning a greater number of votes, but in the fact that it will aid in the mobilisation of the masses of workers for the active



revolutionary struggle, and will contribute to a sound combination of all the resources which are at the disposal of the working class in the struggle against the capitalist attack.

Will the Communist Party now, after the Plenum, be able with unanimous effort to carry through the new tactic? We find a precise and convincing answer to this question in the concluding paragraph of the Plenum's resolution on the French question, and we quote this paragraph in its entirety:

"By its November and January decisions the Communist Party has proved that it has achieved important successes on the road to the establishment of a genuine Bolshevik Party; the consideration of serious tactical problems and criticism of the errors committed reveal a great degree of political maturity and a more intensive political life. It has succeeded in correcting its policy without a crisis and without restricting its great work of propaganda and agitation among the masses. The struggle which it has carried on as one against all in the parliament and throughout the country, the struggle against the policy of repression, against reaction and militarism, the stubborn defence of the every-day interests of the workers and peasants, the soldiers and sailors, has won for it the sympathy and active support of the vast working masses. The blows of the Government are cleansing its ranks of backward and fortuitous elements, which conceal themselves as the 'left opposition' in order to mask their desertion. Those same blows are increasing its capacity for the fight and its revolutionary spirit, and are leading to the extension of its influence among the workers and peasants. The

conditions under which the Party is now carrying on the struggle are favourable to the Party, and its positive achievements, which have been displayed with particular force in the sphere of the struggle with militarism, are a guarantee that the Party will in other spheres of activity also succeed in carrying on a genuinely revolutionary work, and will achieve important successes in the task of mobilising the masses in the struggle against the attack of the government of capital."



## PEACE IN INDUSTRY AND THE TRADE UNIONS

THE gigantic class struggle which is associated with the stabilisation of capital is enormously intensified in the trade union issue. The organisers of the new division of the world cannot but take into account the fact that in the forthcoming war—which is inevitable for the settlement of the problem of dividing the world—the working class will play a more decisive role than it played in previous wars, not excluding the “great” imperialist war of 1914-1918. In consequence of the mechanisation of the entire business of war the working class will have to supply cannon-fodder to the front under the blows of the exterminating technique of the enemy and simultaneously feed and serve in the rear the enormous technical needs of the army of “their own” fatherland. Naturally the outcome of future wars will in enormous measure depend both on the might of the industrial base of the warring parties and on the attitude to the war adopted by the industrial workers, especially the skilled workers, who in the majority of capitalist countries are strongly represented in the trade union movement. Taking into account the nature of the contemporary war business and the character of future wars, warring imperialism is preoccupied with discovering methods of neutralising the possible “pernicious” influence of the trade unions on the movements and counter-movements of the armed struggle for a new division of the world. The neutralisation of the trade unions—such is the minimum programme of imperialism, which in regard to the trade unions is setting itself

still more extensive tasks, namely, their transformation into instruments of victory.

## POLICY OF THE BOURGEOISIE TOWARDS THE TRADE UNIONS

The trade union problem is greatly agitating the bourgeoisie not only from the point of view of preparation for new wars, but because of the tasks connected with the direct achievement of the programme for the rationalisation of industry, which on the one hand is dictated by the struggle to organise for victory in future struggles, and on the other by the tasks of peace-time competition on the world market. In consequence the policy of the bourgeoisie in regard to the trade unions has as its aim, on the one hand, their disarming as organs of class struggle as far as possible, and on the other, their consolidation and development as the channels of capitalist influence on the workers and as agencies contributing to the “painless” achievement of rationalisation. Arising out of this double task, the French bourgeoisie includes the reformist Confederation of Labour in the National Council for the “rehabilitation” of the French economy, and simultaneously introduces the military law which provides for the complete militarisation of all the workers’ organisations in general and of the trade unions in particular. We have observed, and still observe, a similar double policy in Britain. The passing of the Trade Union Act, correctly called the “Blacklegs’ Charter,” was effected step by step with the working-up of the trade union leaders with a view to the establishment of a permanent organ preserving peace in industry.

The British trade union law is distinguished from the French military law only by the difference that while the French bourgeoisie postpone the complete disarming of the trade unions till the outbreak of war, the British



law provides for an immediate partial disarmament of the trade unions. The activity displayed by the British bourgeoisie is conditioned on the one hand by the general strength of the British trade union movement, and on the other by the growing specific weight of the left elements inside the organs of the old British trade unions. The head of the British Cabinet, Stanley Baldwin, was quite frank when he explained to Parliament that the necessity of the new law was demonstrated by the course and character both of the General Strike and of the miners' lock-out. The purport of Baldwin's explanation amounts to this, that despite the Conservative Government's continuing to have complete confidence in the loyalty of the trade union leaders, they are none the less compelled to take a number of preventive steps, taking into account the obvious fact that the reformist leaders did not have complete control of the masses during the first days of May, 1926, and during the months following the betrayal of the General Strike.

The bourgeoisie is carrying out its policy in regard to the trade unions with the active assistance of the social-reformists, who have entrenched themselves so strongly in the trade unions as to represent an indispensable power in the hands of the ruling classes. Both in Britain and in France, and also in Germany, the work of reducing the trade union to the status of part of the apparatus of the employers and the State, and also the carrying through of the laws immediately directed against the rights and privileges of the trade unions have been effected mainly by the efforts of the social-reformists themselves. In certain cases the social-reformists acted openly (France and Germany), while in other cases (Britain) they preferred to represent opposition to the ruthless anti-trade union laws, while

actually creating the necessary favourable situation for their being put into force.

Of course, the bourgeoisie is not confining itself to the services of the social-reformists in the work of realising its trade union programme. Everywhere and always it is striving to ensure that side by side with the loyal trade unions, which are still more or less affected by the pressure of the masses, it shall have its own company unions, which the bourgeoisie exploits on the one hand for the purpose of struggle against possible deviations of the trade unions leftward, and on the other, for the aim of a swifter and more reliable realisation of its plans for rationalisation. The ruling classes of Europe are now expending tremendous efforts both on these company unions and on the entire system for the direct subjugation of the leaders of the working class to the influence and leadership of the bourgeoisie. Especial energy and especial activity are being displayed by the German industrialists, who consider that the entire preceding stage of rationalisation has been only the preliminary to the gigantic work which confronts them in the realisation of their imperialist designs.

#### AGREEMENT BETWEEN INDUSTRIALISTS AND SOCIAL-REFORMISTS

From the viewpoint of the struggle for the soul of the worker the conference of the All-German Industrial Union, held in September, 1927, at Frankfurt-on-Main, demands special attention. At this conference the industrialists were strikingly frank in their consideration of the ways and methods of effecting the ideological subjugation of the proletariat, with the assistance afforded by the demoralisation of the upper ranks of the working class by special wages bribes. The German industrialists worked out the problem of inculcating into



the workers such "economic conceptions" as would ensure their assistance to the bourgeoisie in carrying through all its plans. The Frankfurt conference approached the question of the trade unions also from this aspect. The industrialists' formulas can be expressed as follows: If the trade unions will contribute to the working out of a desirable "economic conception" we shall base ourselves on them. But if the trade unions draw the workers away from a correct economic conception by way of the class struggle, the industrialists will have to carry on a struggle against the trade unions also. But while preparing for the struggle the industrialists simultaneously emphasised that they were prepared to co-operate with the trade unions, if the latter consistently executed their will. From the point of view of the industrialist programme in regard to the trade unions the speech made at this conference by Privy-Councillor Gastle is typical:

"Permit me to make a few brief remarks on the role of the trade unions in the sphere of professional training. We know that they take a very distrustful attitude to the work of the industrial and technical schools. Of recent days 'Dinta' [the German institute for the Technical Training of Workers] has been subjected to special attack. They are afraid that the worker who has passed through an industrial or technical school will become hostile to the trade union idea. But in reality this is inaccurate. It is only a question of giving the young worker as good a training as possible for his future profession and of making him as valuable a link as possible in the production process. . . . The trade unions must realise that the training of highly qualified worker specialists will only bring with it an increase in

the productivity of our economy, and consequently the improvement of our economic foundations also. . . ."

This speech contains the conditions of agreement between the industrialists and the trade unions, conditions which have in their essence and in their entirety become a part of the charter of social-rationalisation worked out by the French Confederation of Labour. But the leaders of the German trade unions saw no justification for objecting to and declaring against the Privy Councillor's programme. On the contrary, immediately after the Frankfurt conference the official organ of the German trade unions hastened to inform its masters that the leaders of the German trade unions are chiefly preoccupied with the establishment of the prerequisites for "production of high quality." They went even further, and proposed the reconstruction of the organs of the industrialists in such a spirit and direction that they would represent united economic machinery on the pattern and likeness of the French National Economic Council.

The carrying through and realisation of this programme of peace in industry demands from the social-reformist leaders of the trade unions an intensified struggle against strikes, and their direct participation in the work of making the entire trade union machinery a part of the State apparatus. It goes without saying that the mere modification of the ideological and organisational outlook of the social-reformists is by no means sufficient to ensure that this audacious programme will be carried out. Consequently the social-democrats are forced to carry out a number of measures in the struggle against the traditions of the trade union movement itself and against the attitude of the proletarian masses, in order to guarantee the possibility of carrying through



the Americanisation of the trade unions in the absence of those economic pre-requisites which established the American system.

Consequently the eyes of the social-reformists are turned towards a combination of the American methods (which developed in circumstances governed by economic development) with those European methods which are directly practised in one small part of Europe, namely, in Italy, in the circumstances of an open Fascist regime.

#### THE PERSECUTION OF REVOLUTIONARIES IN THE TRADE UNIONS

The struggle of the trade union bureaucracy is directed in the first place against the revolutionary elements in the trade unions themselves, and against the Communists before all others. Jointly with the employers, and in alliance with the organs of the State Government, they are carrying out a cleansing of the unions from revolutionary proletarian elements. This cleansing amounts not only to exclusion from the unions, but also to the expulsion of revolutionary workers from the factories, a measure which is equivalent to condemning them to starvation.

Naturally, this policy of the social-reformists is transforming the trade unions into the centre of an extremely tense struggle between the revolutionary proletarian elements and the social-rationalisers. The struggle is growing, developing and becoming more severe in every union without exception. This makes the problem of the role and tasks of the Communists in trade unions the most acute and the most burning problem of the class struggle in the present stage of capitalist rationalisation.

In the intensifying struggle within the trade unions we observe the consolidation of the social-reformists both

on a national and on an international scale. The endeavour to transform the so-called Amsterdam International into an instrument of capitalist rationalisation was revealed with particular clarity at the last (Paris) Congress of the International Federation of Trade Unions.

#### THE TRADE UNIONS AS CAPITALIST INSTRUMENTS

This Congress was held in the summer of 1927. The task of the Congress would seem to have consisted in taking stock of the three years which had passed between 1924 (the Third Congress at Vienna) and the summer of 1927. As is well known, the Viennese Congress was held at the time of the halcyon months of social-reformism, when MacDonald was at the head of the first Labour Government in Britain, and Herriot at the head of the Government of the left cartel in France. It was at this very Viennese Congress that the trade union social-reformists promised the working class the era of great reforms, which would remove from them all the horrors of capitalist exploitation. The years following this magniloquent Congress afforded no justification whatever for the social-reformists' promises. They were obliged to take stock of the road they had travelled, and to indicate the new tasks which had been thrust before the working class by the course of the capitalist attack. And the social-reformists drew their conclusions in their own fashion in a quite precise and categorical form.

The general trend of the Paris Congress was predetermined by the report which was presented to it by the Executive Committee. In this report the Executive passed over in silence those eloquent figures which witness to a systematic decline in the number of members of the reformist International Federation of Trade Unions. As we know, this federation was established in



1919. At the moment of its establishment it counted 23,170,000 members. Beginning from that very moment the number of members has fallen continuously, and in the last year reported Amsterdam formally numbered only 13,366,380 members, of which one part did not pay any members' contributions whatever, while another part in various countries openly attacked the Amsterdam leadership. The Amsterdam fathers uttered not a word on this catastrophic continual diminution in the number of members, basing themselves on the sound realisation that, in view of the presence of reformist consolidation, the essence of the matter consisted not so much in the number of members as in the sound welding of their apparatus.

In its report the Executive Committee also gave little space to the cruel results of the prolonged and universal capitalist attack, which has already mercilessly wiped out a large part of the conquests of the working class. The report directs its arrows (in complete accord with the orientation of the ruling classes) against Moscow and the Soviet trade unions. There is nothing new and surprising in this attitude on the part of the Amsterdam leaders. The social-reformists cannot but take into account the indubitable and obvious fact that a serious obstacle to the realisation of capitalist rationalisation and the transformation of the trade unions into State apparatus is presented not only by the revolutionary workers in the capitalist countries, but also first and foremost by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which by the fact of its existence is a challenge to the whole capitalist system. Their malicious attitude to the U.S.S.R. is conditioned also by the simple little fact that the socialist construction of the first Republic of Labour provides a summary explanation of the difference between the system of capitalist rationalisation and

the system of socialist rationalisation. The direct results of socialist rationalisation are a rise in wages, a reduction of the working day and a consolidation of the basic position of the working class. The results of capitalist rationalisation are demonstrated in a fall in the real wages of the majority of the proletariat, a lengthening of the working day of all workers, and in the transformation of the working-class organisations from being a weapon for the defence of proletarian interests into an instrument for the suppression and oppression of the proletarian masses. In such circumstances the social-reformists must naturally redouble their struggle against the U.S.S.R. in order to overcome the growing attraction and growing sympathy of the vast proletarian masses towards the first socialist State.

The arguments which the Amsterdam fathers adduced against the Soviet trade unions are worthy of special consideration. The first and fundamental sin of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions, in the opinion of Oudegeest and his adherents, consists in the fact that they have given every assistance to the workers of other countries in the struggle against the attack of capital. The report of the Executive Committee calls this assistance " 'A criminal hounding on' in every economic conflict, no matter in what country that conflict arose!" The second sin of the All-Russian C.C. of Trade Unions consists in their audacity in calling the Amsterdam traitors by their right names. This unmasking of the activities of the channels of bourgeois influence in the working class is referred to in the report of the Amsterdam Executive Committee as "everlasting howls about treachery every time action is taken which conflicts with their own views." Finally, the most terrible sin of the All-Russian C.C. of Trade Unions, the one which the Amsterdammers cannot forgive



under any circumstances, consists in the assistance which the U.S.S.R. workers, united in their trade unions, afforded to the British miners. Oudegeest knew, of course, that the defeat of the British miners was a matter of life and death for British imperialism. And consequently he hurls thunder and lightning at the Soviet trade unions, which broke through the blockade of the British miners organised by Amsterdam in alliance with the British General Council.

#### THE UNITED FRONT WITH THE BOURGEOISIE

The activities of the Paris Congress were carried on wholly and entirely in the spirit of the line which had been laid down in the Executive Committee's report. In his programme speech at this Congress its leader, Oudegeest, explained without any equivocation whatever that the fundamental task of the International Federation of Trade Unions is the struggle against revolution. And this point of view met with complete agreement among all the Amsterdamers, including the British representatives, who, while formally continuing to play the role of the left wing at Amsterdam, are none the less essentially an indivisible part of the united and consolidated reformist bureaucracy, faithfully and truly serving the interests of the ruling classes.

The Paris Congress was marked by a quarrel between the various leaders of the various sections composing the Amsterdam International. This quarrel developed on the one hand out of the existence of a financial crisis in the Amsterdam International, for although its services are highly esteemed by the ruling classes they are paid for with far from adequate generosity. On the other hand, this quarrel was the natural result of the struggle which the social-reformists of various countries are continually carrying on among

themselves both in the Second International and in the Amsterdam Trade Union International. The reformists of all countries are agreed in their promoting of the policy of organised assistance to capitalist rationalisation. At the same time, each national reformist organisation defends the interests of its own national bourgeoisie, and in the circumstances of international competition those interests naturally come into conflict with the interests of the bourgeoisie of other countries. This international struggle will naturally increase in intensity as new wars for the re-division of the world draw nearer. But at the present moment the social-reformists, as well as the imperialists, are striving by all the means in their power for the establishment of a united front, directed against the U.S.S.R. on the one hand and against the revolutionary workers and Communists in capitalist countries on the other. The Paris Congress represented the triumph of this united front, which continues to be realised after the Congress also.

The complex and difficult tasks with which Amsterdam is faced in the present situation had as their consequence the recognition of the right of the tried and tested German social-reformists to the leading role in the work of realising the programme of transforming the trade unions into State apparatus. To-day the German social-democrats are establishing an ideological hegemony inside Amsterdam in the work of promoting an imperialist policy in regard to the trade unions. All the experience of German social-democracy, in whose ranks are numbered experienced executioners of the working class in the political arena and hard-baked charlatans in the trade union world, is a guarantee that under their guidance Amsterdam will direct the struggle of the social-reformists against the working class in various countries with an expert hand.



## COMMUNISTS AND INDUSTRIAL PEACE

We have already pointed out that the policy of social-democracy in the trade unions is directed against the strike struggle and against the revolutionary proletarians. It is for this very reason that the resolution adopted by the Comintern Plenum on "The Economic Struggle and the Tasks of Communists" begins with a definition of the role and significance of the strike struggle in the present stage of capitalist rationalisation. The first clause of the resolution reads :

"In the conditions of a particularly swift centralisation of capital, the present period of growth of capitalist organisations (trusts, concerns, etc., and the fusion of these organisations with the apparatus of the State power of the bourgeoisie, the strike struggle has a tendency very rapidly to develop a political character in which the forces of the proletariat clash with the forces of the bourgeois State. In these conditions the task of the Communists consists in elucidating to the masses the prospects of the struggle, in mobilising the widest sections of workers, contributing in all ways to their revolutionary consolidation, and leading the whole struggle on to its higher stage."

In opposition to the strike struggle the reformists set the complicated system called "industrial peace," which in essence has as its aim the direct task of liquidating the trade unions as organs of defence of the proletarian interests, and their transformation into instruments of capitalist rationalisation. In the second clause of the Plenum resolution we find a definition of those slogans which the Communists must counterpose to the system of industrial peace. This clause reads :

"The Communists and revolutionary workers generally must have as their fundamental tactic a resolute and ruthless struggle against the so-called 'industrial peace,' which is no other than one of the latest forms of subjugating the working class to the bourgeoisie. Consequently the mobilisation of the masses must be carried out first and foremost together with concrete demands in the sphere of wages and the workers' day, under the slogan of the freedom of the strike struggle, against compulsory arbitration, against the social-democratic fidelity to wage agreements, and, as a general principle, in favour of wage agreements being of a short-termed character."

The strength of capitalist rationalisation consists in the fact that, thanks to a good organisation of espionage, the capitalists in the great enterprises are comparatively successful in introducing so-called Americanisation. In this regard the new giants of modern industry built up in post-war France are in a particularly favourable situation from the point of view of capitalist rationalisation. For their new industry the French capitalists have borrowed not only the American technique of production, but also the American technique of enslavement of the proletariat. The great enterprises are thus becoming citadels of capitalist exploitation. On the other hand, the trade union aristocracy are actually putting up opposition to any extension of the trade union basis, holding to the principle of the federation and consolidation in the trade unions of that upper stratum of the working class which is most receptive to the social-reformists' ideology. For this reason the third clause of the resolution emphasises the importance of the struggle for influence in the great concentrated enterprises, and of increased attention to those proletarian masses who in



almost every country remain outside the confines of the trade unions. This third clause reads :

"In order to obtain a wide mobilisation of the masses on a scale greater than ever before, a swifter penetration into the great concentrated enterprises is necessary. The maximum militant unity of the working class, the organisation of the unorganised, the organisation of the widest strata of unskilled masses, the rendering powerful of the at present insignificant organisational strength of the workers in large enterprises—all this must be the central task of the Communist advance-guard."

#### THE STRIKE PROBLEM

The whole present situation in its entirety demands concentrated attention on the problems of the strike struggle. We know that the social-reformists in all countries are striving to replace strikes by arbitration courts. They do not everywhere succeed in this. In the measure that the awakening of the masses begins to find expression in militant activity, the social-reformists are forced to agree to a strike, even despite their will and despite their plans. Their strategy in a strike is simple and clear. By organised sabotage they strive to break the strike, in order thus to discredit this "barbarous" instrument of the class struggle. A clear illustration of this sabotage tactic—a breaking of a strike with consequent discredit of the strike as a weapon of struggle—was observable in Britain during the miners' lock-out, and in Germany in connection with the tense struggle in the metal industry. In these conditions it goes without saying that the Communists must strive to safeguard their leadership in the strikes in order to save the workers from defeat and to guarantee their victory.

But it is this very task which is accompanied by the maximum of difficulties. The strength of the social-reformists consists in the very fact that they base themselves on a framework of experienced and tried trade union officials, whom the members of the unions as a general rule show the greatest restraint in attempting to replace. Bernard Shaw's remark that in Britain it is easier to overthrow any government you please than to remove a trade union official is absolutely applicable to the officials of the British trade unions. But in other countries also the removal of trade union officials is accompanied with exceptional difficulties. What influence officialism has in Germany is illustrated by the tense election campaign inside the trade unions which took place in December, 1927, and January and February, 1928, in the majority of the German unions. This election campaign showed how deeply the social-reformists have entrenched themselves in the trade unions. At the same time we note the beginning of a new attitude to the trade union officialdom both in Britain and in Germany. In the British Miners' Federation the Communists have succeeded in unseating very old "irremovable" officials, who were profoundly convinced that they would remain at their posts to the end of their days. The last trade union election campaign in Germany also gave definite positive results to the Communists and the left opposition.

The complexity of the strike strategy is conditioned on the one hand by the role of the social-reformists in the trade unions, and on the other by the fact that in the conditions of the centralisation and trustification of capital the strike struggle demands an augmented and more energetic preparation. And the Comintern Plenum considered it necessary to attempt to indicate the basic tasks of the strategy of the strike



struggle in the resolution on the economic struggle. From this point of view the last clause of the general trade union resolution adopted by the Comintern Plenum deserves extra attention. It (clause seven) reads :

"In order to carry the masses during a strike, preliminary energetic work is necessary before the strike. The Communist must always be with the masses, and must prove that he is better than the reformists by his regular, every-day activity, by his intelligent and energetic defence of the workers' interests. The workers judge the Communists not by their words, but by their deeds; this is why the problem of the every-day, detailed political and organisational work in the enterprises is the preliminary condition, without the realisation of which the pretensions to leadership of the strikes will remain only paper ones. The Communists will be able the more easily to take the direction of the strike movement into their own hands if before the strike they succeed in developing an extensive movement for the setting up of factory committees in the enterprises, or conquer strong positions in the factory and workshop committees wherever they exist. These committees afford the finest basis for the establishment of strike-centres, elected and recognised by the wide working masses."

#### THE EXPULSIONS FROM THE TRADE UNIONS

The Plenum could not confine itself to this general resolution on the Communists' tasks in the economic struggle. It was forced to give particular attention to the question of the expulsion of Communists from the trade unions. These expulsions are in the great majority of countries becoming the most important

weapon of the social-reformists in their work of transforming the unions into State apparatus. We cite the resolution devoted to expulsions in its entirety. It reads :

"In connection with the leftward trend of the Labour movement and the developing strike-wave, the Amsterdamers are opening a furious campaign along the whole line against the Communists in the trade union movement. Expulsion from the unions, and the splitting of union organisations wherever the Communists have obtained the predominant influence, have become an every-day international phenomena. (Germany, France, Switzerland, Esthonia, etc.) Meantime a certain passivity in regard to this question is to be observed among Communists.

"The Communists must :

"(a) Carry on a resolute and open struggle under the slogan of the unity of the trade union movement against expulsions from trade unions.

"(b) This struggle must in the first place be carried on among the rank and file by means of the organisation of mass meetings of protest, in favour of trade union democracy, and so on.

"(c) The Party press must give the maximum attention to this question.

"(d) We must strive to obtain that these trade union organisations which have refused to expel Communists at the dictates of the higher reformist centres should show their solidarity with the expelled, should carry on an active struggle for unity and against expulsions.

"(e) The endeavour to remain in the ranks of the trade union must *never* result in the Com-



munist tending to renounce active revolutionary political work inside the trade unions."

#### THE STRUGGLE IN THE TRADE UNIONS

We have already mentioned the importance of the cadres of trade union officials in the struggle between reformism and Communism in the trade unions. From this aspect the Plenum also approached the analysis of the defects of the Communist Parties' and the revolutionary unions' organisational work. This analysis revealed the existence of the most colossal defects both in the work of the Communists inside the reformist unions, where they establish their influence by means of the Minority Movement or through the Communist fractions, and also in the revolutionary trade unions, where the Communists play the leading role. On the basis of all the defects manifested in the process of studying the organisational work of the Communists in the trade union movement, the Plenum formulated the following proposals, relating to the work of Communists in the trade union movement of all countries :

(1) The conquest of the most important spheres of industry, the most important industrial areas and the great factories and workshops.

(2) The drawing in of the maximum number of workers in each enterprise into trade union work.

(3) The construction of trade union organs on the basis of the enterprise (workshop organisation), in order to do which the conquest of the lower trade union machinery is indispensable.

(4) The control of the factory committees wherever they exist, the establishment of factory committees where at present they do not exist, and

the transformation of the factory committees into the primary organs of industrial unions.

(5) The transference of all the most important problems of the trade union movement for consideration directly in the enterprises.

(6) Communists must direct particular attention to the maintenance of the class character of the factory committees, putting up resistance to the attempts of the employers and the social-democrats to turn the factory committees into weapons of class collaboration.

(7) The struggle against bureaucratic centralism, the struggle for extensive trade union democracy, *i.e.*, for the greatest possible extension of the rights of the local trade union organisations, proportional elections of the administrative bodies of the unions, the annual election of the administration and of responsible officials in the trade unions, and so on.

(8) The establishment of a strong financial basis for the revolutionary trade union movement of all countries. The forms and methods of financial assessment to be determined according to the country, the character of the movement and the circumstances.

(9) The retention of the principle of construction (from bottom upwards) applied in all our organisations in the structure of the revolutionary minorities and the independent unions.

(10) The struggle against the bureaucratisation of the central machinery, and the transference of the centre of importance of all work to the local units, directly to the factories and workshops.



(11) The attraction of worker immigrants into the unions on the basis of complete equality and a resolute struggle against hostility to foreign workers. Simultaneously the revolutionary trade unions must, by means of the mass education of their emigrant members ensure that these workers shall not remain unorganised, shall not be transformed into a blind weapon in the hands of the local employers and the reformist bureaucracy, in the land to which they have emigrated.

(12) The strengthening of the unemployed organisation, the struggle against the exclusion of unemployed from the trade unions and in favour of the maintenance of the connection between unemployed and their organisations when they are excluded from the unions.

(13) The attraction of the women and the youth into the trade unions and their advancement to active trade union work.

(14) In their activities, Communists must as a rule start from every-day concrete demands, and so work to general questions, and not *vice versa*.

(15) A resolute ending of the inattentive attitude that has hitherto prevailed in all countries to the work of fractions in the revolutionary and reformist trade unions, and also to that of the trade union sections attached to Party committees. The attention of the entire Party must be concentrated on the practical carrying out of the corresponding decisions of the Second Organisational Conference of the E.C.C.I.

Together with these general proposals the Plenum formulated the tasks of Communists in countries with

a disintegrated trade union movement, where separate organisations of revolutionary trade unions exist (France, Czecho-Slovakia, etc.) These proposals are :

(1) To carry on unflagging recruitment of new members, among the unorganised in the first place, especially exploiting the moments of mass activity.

(2) To carry on the struggle against the fluctuations of membership by introducing fighting funds, funds of mutual assistance, etc.

(3) To reconstruct the unions on the industrial principle, without forming them by or resorting to merely mechanical fusion.

(4) To federate the factory committees of all enterprises entering into one concern or trust, in order to establish joint action against concentrated capital, with the obligatory maintenance of separate factory committees in each enterprise.

(5) To direct particular attention to the establishment of all kinds of mixed committees in the enterprises in the lower organs of the trade unions, such as committees of action and other organs of the united front, both with the workers of reformist trade unions, and with the unorganised workers on the basis of the promotion of concrete tasks.

(6) The development of a militant trade union press, the establishment of special revolutionary trade union literature, co-operation in the establishment of unity clubs, and so on.

#### THE AMERICAN POSITION

The entire political resolution on the tasks of Communists, and also the organisational proposals formu-



lated by the Comintern Plenum have relation chiefly to the trade union movement in Europe. The Plenum devoted a special clause to the tasks of Communists in American trade unions. We quote this clause in its entirety :

"In the United States, where the overwhelming majority of the workers are unorganised, where the members of the existing trade unions are recruited mainly from among skilled workers—the worker aristocracy—where the most important trade unions are passing through a process of disintegration, the central place in all Communist work in the trade unions must be occupied by a more energetic endeavour to organise the unorganised masses of unskilled and semi-skilled workers. The slogan 'Organise the unorganised!' should not be a summons to the corruptible trade union bureaucracy who reject the task of organising the working masses, and equally it should not be a one-sided summons of the Communist Party itself.

"The task of the Communist Party consists in organising on their own initiative trade unions in those spheres of production in which the workers are either completely or almost completely unorganised (steel, motor-cars, rubber, footwear and textile industries, water transport, etc.).

"At the same time it is absolutely necessary that the Communists should continue and intensify their activities in trade unions attached to the reactionary American Federation of Labour in order to establish a strong left wing inside them.

"As many trade unions refuse to accept negro workers in their ranks, the Communist Party must take the initiative in setting up trade unions of negro workers, and at the same time must continue the struggle for the opening of existing trade unions to negro workers. The Communists must struggle for the union of negro workers' trade unions with the trade union organisations of white workers in one and the same sphere of industry.

"Despite the fact that the corrupted bureaucracy puts obstacles in the way of the conquest of the miners' union by the left wing, resorting to various forms of machination, duplicity and repression, the Communists must not withdraw from this union. But in view of the decline through which the miners' union is now passing the left elements must take the initiative in establishing new unions on a local scale in coal-mining areas, where the workers are not organised, and in localities where the miners' organisation has been dispersed or has fallen to pieces."

#### THE TRADE UNIONS OF THE EAST

The Comintern Plenum did not occupy itself with the problems of the trade union movement in eastern countries, where we observe an entirely different cor-relationship of forces. It is true that Amsterdam, following the example of the Second International, is now "turning its face to the East." It has succeeded in incorporating in its ranks the negro union in South Africa, working through the renegade Kadalie. Through Purcell it is taking all measures to work up the Indian trade union movement. At the same time there is no doubt that the efforts of the social-reformists in the East



will remain fruitless. The trade union movements in the colonial and semi-colonial countries are openly inclining to the R.I.L.U. The activity of the Chinese revolutionary trade unions is known to everybody. In Indonesia also, before the murderous suppression of the Indonesian insurrection, we observed the development of a revolutionary trade union movement which was openly attached to the R.I.L.U. If a comparison be made between the R.I.L.U. and Amsterdam from the aspect of their attitude to the East, the conclusion is inevitable that while the R.I.L.U. is an organisation uniting the revolutionary trade unions and revolutionary workers who are members of the reformist unions in capitalist countries, with the trade unions in colonial and semi-colonial countries, on the basis of the class struggle, the Amsterdam International is an organisation basing itself on the upper ranks of the European proletariat, bringing the influence of the bourgeoisie to bear on the working class through the trade unions, and now striving to bring demoralisation and disintegration into the trade union movement of eastern countries.

The struggle between the social-reformists and the Communists in the trade unions is now at its height. It is a reflection of the continually intensifying class struggle in capitalist countries. In this struggle the social-reformists depend on their strong machinery, on the aristocracy of the working class, and, mainly, on the organised assistance of the employers and the machinery of the bourgeois State. But in the struggle against social-reformism the Communists depend on the rise of class-consciousness in the proletarian masses and on the leftward process which is going on in the masses, a process which is distinctly indicated, and which shows that the masses are recovering from the depression of the last few years, and are advancing to the struggle with attack-

ing capital. The importance of the Comintern Plenum consists in the fact that it succeeded in precisely formulating the tasks of Communism in this severe struggle, and in arming the Communists with a clear strategic plan for a successful campaign against the social-rationalisers.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE PROBLEMS OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

THE fate of the stabilisation of capital is closely and inseparably bound up with the course and the issue of the great Chinese revolution. The significance and importance of the Chinese revolution consists not only in the fact that it is encroaching on the enormous market of a country with four hundred million inhabitants, on a market the role of which is particularly great in the present situation of tense and growing international competition; the general importance of the Chinese revolution is conditioned first and foremost by the fact that *it is a challenge to the whole capitalist system*. The stabilisers of capitalism, and the stabilisers of European capitalism in the first instance are fully aware that the fundamental, decisive pre-requisite of a complete capitalist stabilisation is not only the introduction of rationalisation, but first and foremost the restoration of the East to the state in which it vegetated in the years immediately preceding the war. In its resolutions and decisions on the Chinese revolution the Communist International has always and everywhere emphasised the *International, anti-imperialist significance of the revolutionary struggle in China*. In the Chinese resolution adopted by the Comintern Executive Committee in July, 1927, we read :

*"The great Chinese revolution is more and more becoming a factor of enormous importance, one directed against the entire system of international imperialism and its chief world-centres."*

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The same idea is expressed in different words in the Chinese resolution adopted by the Executive Committee in July, 1927 :

*"The struggle of the Chinese workers and peasants is a struggle for the front-line positions of the Communist International."*

This international importance of the Chinese revolution explains the harsh and ruthless character of the murderous war being waged against the insurgent workers and peasants of China. To the imperialists the defeat of the Chinese revolution is a matter of life and death for the imperialist system itself, and they defend that system with bestial ferocity. The day will come when the insurgent workers of capitalist countries will tear the seals from the secret archives of their governments. And then we shall obtain convincing proofs of the extent to which the shameful and cruel extermination of the finest sons of the Chinese people was organised by the civilised bandits in London, Washington and Tokio. And in their turn the civilised bandits have been and are still being assisted by the social-imperialists. Under such conditions there is nothing strange in the fact that the revolution in China continues to hold the centre of attention in the Comintern, and that its problems were the subject of most diligent consideration at the last, the Ninth, Plenum of the E.C.C.I.

The Chinese revolution has experienced a series of heavy trials. The period which elapsed between the Eighth and Ninth Plenums of the Comintern was filled with intense and sanguinary struggle. In that struggle, despite the fact that it suffered a series of heavy defeats, the Chinese revolution passed to a higher stage of development. The clearest expression of this new stage in the development of the Chinese revolution was indubit-



ably the Canton insurrection, which the Comintern estimates "as an example of the great heroism of the Chinese workers, rightly claiming the historic role of leadership in the great Chinese revolution." The historical significance of the Canton insurrection consists in the very fact that it represented the heroic attempt of the Chinese proletariat to organise a Soviet Power. Despite the fact that it was drowned in blood in the most barbaric fashion, as the result of this insurrection the slogan of "Soviet Power" will henceforth cease to be merely a slogan mobilising the vast proletarian masses, and will become the direct slogan of revolutionary action.

#### THE PLENUM AND THE EXPERIENCES IN CHINA

The enormous experience which has been accumulated during the last few months of intense struggle was the subject of diligent analysis and detailed study at the last Plenum of the Communist International. The results of this analysis were formulated in the "Resolution on the Chinese question," which was adopted unanimously at the session on February 25th, 1928.

Before turning to the analysis of this resolution, we shall endeavour to give some consideration to those documents which preceded it, in order to have a correct conception of those modifications and movements which have occurred both during the course of development of the Chinese revolution, and also during the life and activity of the young Communist Party, now heading the struggle of the Chinese workers and peasants.

As long ago as December, 1926, the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I. gave a definition of the character of the Chinese revolution as one which at that stage of its development was bourgeois-democratic, and simultaneously one the whole point of which was directed against imperialist oppression. (See the E.C.C.I. reso-

lution for July, 1927). Starting from this estimate and definition of the character of the Chinese revolution, the Comintern defined its general line, remembering that the development of a revolutionary movement entails an intensification of the class struggle, as the result of which the bourgeoisie in the first instance will abandon the revolution to become its greatest enemies.

The Eighth Plenum of the Comintern could recognise the accuracy both of the historical prognosis made by the Comintern and of the tactical line which was laid down on the basis of that prognosis. This Plenum (in May, 1927) was called upon to define the character of the new stage of the Chinese revolution, and also the purport and significance of the treachery of Chiang-Kai Shek. In the resolution of the May Plenum we read: "A series of bourgeois counter-revolutionary *coups d'état* (in Shanghai, Nanking, Canton and elsewhere) betokened a partial defeat of the Chinese revolution and a definite growth in the strength of the counter-revolutionary bloc." Starting from a general analysis of the tasks of the revolution in China, the May Plenum emphasised that "at the present moment the questions of the organisation of the army, of the creation of absolutely faithful revolutionary divisions, of the linking of the army with workers' and peasants' organisations, of the safeguarding of the basic framework of the army, of the transformation of the army from a mercenary to a regular army of the revolution, etc., are raised with particular severity."

The events of the Chinese revolution have developed with the speed of lightning. Even in July, 1927, the Comintern was compelled to occupy itself once more with the Chinese problem and to indicate the new tasks confronting the Chinese revolutionary movement on the one hand, and on the other to point out the weaknesses and



errors which had been manifested in the activity of the Chinese Communist Party during this period of radical and severe fluctuations.

The fundamental modifications which have taken place since the May Plenum were formulated in clause five of the July resolution, which we here quote in its entirety :

"Basing itself on the teaching of Lenin, the Communist International has considered and continues to consider blocs and alliances with the national-colonial bourgeoisie at definite stages expedient, fully permissible and necessary, in so far as that bourgeoisie is carrying on a struggle with imperialism. In definite phases of the revolutionary process it is permissible and even obligatory to support the military advances of the bourgeoisie against the forces of imperialism or its militarist supporters. For that struggle with imperialism is to the advantage of the work of the revolution.

"From this Leninist point of view, analogies with the bourgeois democratic revolution in Russia had to be rejected and were rejected, for in that country Bolshevism quite justly refused all and every agreement with counter-revolutionary Liberalism. But blocs with bourgeois groupings and the affording of support to their military forces are permissible only to the extent that, and so long as, this does not hinder the independent work of the Chinese Communist Party, so long as the Liberal bourgeoisie refrain from attacking the workers and peasants, so long as the bourgeoisie are still in the condition to resolve the tasks of

the bourgeois-democratic revolution. The support of the northern advance was absolutely sound so long as that advance set free the mass revolutionary movement. The support of Wuhan was absolutely sound so long as Wuhan acted as the opponent of Chiang Kai Shekist Nanking. But this same tactic of forming a bloc becomes radically unsound from the moment that the Wuhan Government capitulates to the enemies of the revolution. That which was of service during the preceding stage of the revolution is now quite unserviceable.

"It goes without saying that all this involves a certain difficulty for the Party leadership, and the more so for the leadership of such a young and inexperienced Party as is the Communist Party of China. That difficulty is increased by the fact that the elemental, irresistible course of events restricts the stage of struggle from the time aspect, swiftly transfers the process from one stage to another, reduces the period in the course of which the particular tactical orientation adopted is of service. In the circumstance of a tense revolutionary situation it is necessary to seize the peculiar features of the moment with the maximum swiftness; it is necessary to manœuvre intelligently and betimes, it is necessary to change slogans swiftly and betimes, it is necessary to effect a timely re-arrangement of the ranks of the proletarian advance-guard, to react energetically to the modified situation, and resolutely to smash the blocs which from being factors of revolutionary struggle are becoming its fetters."



## MISTAKES OF THE CHINESE C.P.

In this clause is indicated the first error of the Chinese Communist Party. The Party was unable swiftly to adapt itself to the new factors of revolutionary struggle, and in the new situation continued a tactical line which had been in complete accord with the needs of the preceding stage in the development of the Chinese revolution. But the weakness of the Chinese Communist Party consisted not only of tardiness in the tempo of development of its tactic. In the critical days which followed May the Chinese Communist Party committed a number of serious opportunist errors. These errors are formulated in the seventh clause of the same July resolution, in which we read :

"The present leadership of the Chinese Communist Party has recently committed a number of profound political errors. In accordance with the Comintern's directions the Chinese C.P. should have let loose and headed an agrarian revolution, should have openly criticised and unmasked the half-and-half and cowardly position of the 'radical' leaders of the Wuhan Government and the Central Committee of the Kuomintang, should have warned the masses of the possibilities of treachery on the part of the generals, should have armed more and more sections of the workers, and with firm resolution should have driven the Kuomintang and the Nationalist Government along the genuinely revolutionary road. The C.C. and the Political Bureau of the C.C. of the Chinese Communist Party did not carry out these directions. Instead of leading an agrarian revolution, in a number of cases the C.C. acted as a factor in its restraint. Individual leaders of the

Party put forward openly opportunist slogans : 'The deepening of the revolution only after its extension,' or, 'First Peking, then the agrarian revolution,' which slogans were with complete justification rejected by the Party Congress which expressed the feeling of the Party masses. While the great masses of Chinese Communists carried on a self-denying, genuinely revolutionary struggle among the socially lower classes, among the peasants, workers and town poor, the leadership of the Chinese C.P. carried on a line of holding back the masses. The revolutionary directions of the E.C.C.I. were turned down by the leadership of the Chinese Party. The affair went so far that the Political Bureau of the C.C. of the Chinese C.P. 'agreed' to the disarming of the workers! Despite the openly counter-revolutionary conduct of the heads of the Wuhan Government, Tang Ping Shan could not find the courage to declare openly that he withdrew from the Nationalist Government, substituting for this declaration an unprincipled and cowardly 'petition for leave of absence.' The Communist International more than once criticised the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party in the very severest of terms in its private messages; the C.I. gave warning that it would criticise the C.C. of the Party openly if it did not correct its errors. Now that the C.C. of the Party has turned down the C.I.'s directions, the E.C.C.I. considers it a revolutionary duty to issue an open summons to the members of the Chinese Communist Party to struggle against the opportunism of the C.C."

On the basis of this analysis the Comintern worked out a series of tactical instructions, which were briefly



and concisely formulated in clause eight of this resolution :

*"The development of the agrarian revolution, the continuation of the struggle for the consummation of the bourgeois-democratic revolution by 'plebeian' methods, i.e., by the revolutionary attack of the bloc of the workers, peasants and town poor under the leadership of the proletariat, the systematic arming of the workers and peasants."*

At its August conference (1927) the Chinese Communist Party took most important steps to correct its opportunist errors as indicated in the above cited resolution, and began to head the revolutionary attack of the workers and peasants, establishing the leadership of the working class in doing so. But in the resolution of the last Comintern Plenum we read :

*"Despite the fact that the Chinese Communist Party has on the whole corrected its former opportunist errors (at the August, 1927, Conference of the Chinese Communist Party), as noted in previous Comintern resolutions, it has not yet entirely adapted itself to the conditions of the present situation, but is unsteady both in regard to tactics (under-estimation of the danger of 'putschism,' and of terrorist methods of struggle in the trade unions, and a tendency to guerrilla methods in the villages), and in regard to organisation."*

The significance of these vacillations was formulated in the resolution of the last Plenum with ruthless candour :

*"The greatest danger of the present position consists in the possibility that, as the result of an unsound estimation of the situation and an under-*

*estimation of the strength of the enemy, the advance-guard of the workers' and peasants' movement may get separated from the masses, may get very far in front, scattering its forces and allowing itself to be broken up by sections.'*

#### TENDENCIES OF THE CHINESE COMMUNISTS

It is easy to diagnose the nature of the unsteadiness in the ranks of the Chinese Communist Party. In its new stage of development under the leadership of the Communist Party the Chinese revolution has come face to face with the robber bands acting under the command of individual open imperialists who are competing among themselves in the work of physically exterminating the advance-guard of the labouring people of China in order to please their new masters. The hatred for the blood-thirsty enemy has grown and been transformed into a burning, passionate endeavour to answer blow for blow, without regard to the real correlation of forces or to the obvious results of the defeats which the workers' and peasants' revolution has suffered. This attitude would not be so very dangerous if the leadership of the Communist Party were able to direct the creative, revolutionary energy of the leading divisions of the revolution into the right channel—into the work of taking stock of the enormous experience of the past and the organisation of victory in the future. But the Comintern had to take into account the fact that the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party manifests a tendency to announce this attitude as a principle, and so to increase the danger of the advance-guard becoming separated from all the remaining masses of strugglers—a separation which would entail the inevitable defeat of the revolution.

It is necessary to consider this tendency of the



Chinese Communist Party leadership in somewhat more detail. At its November Plenum the Central Committee of the Chinese C.P. endeavoured to summarise the results of the road they had covered and to indicate their fundamental tasks. Their main ideas were formulated in the resolution on the political situation.

In this resolution we find in the first place a sound characterisation of the impotence of the Chinese counter-revolution to resolve those contradictions which are at the very basis of China's present position. The resolution indicates quite correctly that the Chinese counter-revolution "increases and intensifies those contradictions, hastens and strengthens their conflict, in consequence of the very fact that triumphant reaction is striving to consolidate and to perpetuate all the old and outlived features of Chinese economy, social life and political regime." This counter-revolutionary policy is provoking a crisis which can only be solved by a revolutionary struggle.

The resolution provides an eloquent description of the universal crisis which reigns at present in China, which is groaning under the triple yoke of foreign imperialism, the old reactionary bloc of feudalists and militarists, and finally of the Kuomintang traitors. The crisis finds expression in the catastrophic character of the process of decline and the ruin of agriculture, in the destruction of the trade routes and the interruption of commercial connections both between provinces and also within individual provinces, and finally in the impoverishment, ruin and economic decline of the life of the country. These economic factors of the general crisis are in complete accord with the political factors. It is impossible not to agree with the C.C. resolution when it says that "never since the beginning of the revolution has the rule of foreign capital been so great

in China as it is to-day; never before has the oppressed, semi-colonial situation of a great country been the object of such miserable speculation with imperialism on the part of the ruling classes of China, as it is to-day under the bourgeois-militarist reaction. The resolution also describes all the "attractions" of a combination of the methods adopted by modern "European" Fascism with the tried and tested methods of the old Chinese despotism, and the role which the Kuomintang reaction is playing in the work of bloody suppression of the toilers. The Kuomintang of the present day is characterised as an unprincipled band of lackeys to imperialism, as the thugs of the workers' and peasants' movement, mercenary politicians, spendthrifts, extortioners, criminals and speculators. The resolution also takes stock of the achievements of the Communist Party in overcoming its old opportunist errors, and notes its success in heading the workers' and peasants' revolution.

This analysis might well have formed the foundation of a sound tactic. However, it happened that certain factors in the complex and confused correlation of class forces in China on the one hand, and the obvious tendency to exaggerate the role of scattered guerrilla movements on the other, led the Central Committee of the Party to an unsound political evaluation, which in turn became the basis of an unsound tactic.

#### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DISUNION OF FORCES IN CHINA.

The Central Committee quite correctly stated the obvious fact that the forces of the Chinese counter-revolution are disintegrated. Besides the cruel and murderous struggle which all the reactionary forces are jointly waging against the Chinese revolution, we observe a growing struggle in China among different groups and cliques. In a situation of revolutionary



struggle in a free state the disintegration of the counter-revolutionary forces would have to be estimated as a symptom of the decline of the counter-revolution and of the growth of the forces of revolution. In Chinese conditions the disintegration of counter-revolutionary forces has quite a different significance. Not for a moment must we lose sight of the fact that a third force—in this case the decisive force of imperialism—is obviously profiting by the disintegration of native forces in China, exploiting these various forces in the mutual struggle in order to increase its own might and influence. The sound attitude on the growing hegemony of foreign capital in China enunciated in the political resolution passed by the November Plenum of the Chinese C.C. is the result of the same disintegration which imperialism is expertly exploiting in its own interests. On the other hand, we must not lose sight of the fact that neither armed struggle among the various Chinese cliques, nor the rivalry of various imperialistic groups would hinder the entire bloc of reaction from acting in a solid phalanx against the workers' and peasants' revolution.

Another peculiar feature of social relationships in China is conditioned by the variety of its economic and political composition. The result of this variety is an unequal development of the revolutionary movement in various parts of this enormous country. It is hardly necessary to demonstrate that this inequality of development and growth in the revolutionary movement is a positive factor in favour of imperialism and a negative factor for the workers' and peasants' revolution. In the disintegration of the forces of native counter-revolution the C.C. of the Chinese Communist Party descried a symptom of its complete decline, while in the inequality of development in the revolutionary movement they descried a proof of the unbroken (permanent) character of

the organising role of imperialism in the struggle against the revolution, the Central Committee drew the conclusion that the line of demarcation between the bourgeois democratic stage and the socialist stage in the revolutionary movement of China was being completely erased, completely eliminated; whilst the theory of the permanent character of the Chinese revolution prevented the Central Committee from taking stock of and understanding the lessons of those serious defeats which the workers' and peasants' movement has suffered and which in consequence led to the ebb of the first wave of the new revolutionary flood now being headed by the Communist Party.

#### THE PLENUM AND THE CHINESE SITUATION

The November Plenum of the Chinese C.P. took place before the victory and defeat of the heroic insurrection in Canton. In order to make a Leninist analysis of revolutionary development, the Communist International is obliged to weigh not only the positive features of the great insurrection carried out under the banner of the Soviets, but also the negative features of the new situation which has arisen as the result of its defeat. The defeat of the Canton insurrection, and also the defeats in a number of other revolutionary centres have entailed a definite depression among the Chinese workers. In this new situation the errors committed by the Central Committee at the November Plenum become more dangerous and fatal.

The decisions of the November Plenum led to the necessity of the Communist International precisely defining the present phase of the Chinese revolution. We find a characterisation of that phase in the first clause of the Chinese resolution:

"The present period of the Chinese revolution



is a period of bourgeois democratic revolution, which has not been carried through to its end either in the economic sense (the agrarian revolution and the annihilation of feudal relationships) or in the sense of the national struggle against imperialism (the uniting of China and national independence), or in the sense of the class nature of the government (the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry). The characterisation of the current stage of the Chinese revolution as one which has already grown into a socialist revolution is inaccurate. Its characterisation as a "permanent" revolution is an error analogical to that into which Trotsky fell in 1905. This error is the more dangerous since this conception of the issue excludes also the greatest national feature of the Chinese revolution as a semi-colonial revolution."

It goes without saying that the Comintern could not confine itself to a criticism of the theory as to the permanent character of the Chinese revolution. As we have already said, the main effect of this theory was to conceal the real nature of the present phase in the development of the Chinese revolution. And the Comintern was forced to note that the first wave of the revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants had subsided. "The first wave of the wide revolutionary movement has ended in a number of centres of the revolutionary movement with heavy defeats of the workers and peasants, the physical extermination of part of the Communist and of the general revolutionary ranks of the workers' and peasants' movement, a sharp development of the extreme wings of the social forces, the formulation of the political slogans of the struggling classes, a complete unmasking of the Kuomintang general leadership as a

counter-revolutionary leadership, the achievement of enormous revolutionary experience by the great toiling masses, and finally the transfer of the whole mass revolutionary movement in China to its new Soviet stage." The Comintern also had to declare its attitude to the peculiar Chinese Party interpretation of the ruthless struggle which is going on inside the counter-revolutionary camp. The Comintern resolution categorically declares: "A certain consolidation of the forces of reaction in connection with the regrouping of classes is absolutely indubitable; the bourgeoisie has not only entered into a complete alliance with the counter-revolutionary feudalists and militarists, but has concluded an agreement with foreign imperialism, and the latter is displaying increased activity both along the line of capturing the basic economic positions and along that of strengthening its political influence." Of course, the resolution does not deny the fact of the struggle which is going on among various sections of the counter-revolutionary camp, as well as among various imperialist groups struggling on the backs of the Chinese people. But the resolution emphasises the point that "these three basic forces of counter-revolution, (i) the bourgeoisie, (ii) the counter-revolutionary feudalists and militarists, and (iii) foreign imperialism, are jointly acting against the workers and peasants, against the revolution, against the Communist Party."

The Comintern also gave a clear answer on the question of the inequality of the development of the revolutionary movement in various parts of China. It particularly emphasised the inequality in development of the revolutionary movement in the towns and the villages, noting that "the present moment is characterised, among other features, by the fact that while in a number of provinces the peasant movement is developing further,



in a number of industrial centres the weakened workers, caught in the pressure of an unprecedented White Terror, are going through the stage of a certain depression." It goes without saying that from the analysis of this inequality the Comintern does not at all reach the conclusion as to the permanent nature of the revolution, but reaches the idea of the necessity for firmly and unswervingly concentrating on the masses, not permitting the separation of the advance-guard from the masses and putting up opposition on all hands to any situation in which the counter-revolution could shatter the revolution by sections. The resolution says:

"The Party must prepare for an extensive new revolutionary wave. This wave will inevitably confront the Party with the direct practical task of organising and carrying through a mass armed insurrection, for only by means of an insurrection and overthrow of the present government can the tasks of the revolution be decided. But for that very reason the central task of Party work at the present time consists in the winning of the millions of workers and peasants, their political education, and their organisation around the Party and its slogans."

#### THE QUESTION OF TACTICS

Concentration on the masses, that is the chief slogan of the Chinese revolution as a whole. The Comintern had to emphasise this slogan owing to the fact that the tactical vacillations which we have already mentioned had had their reflection and manifestation not only in resolutions and theses, but in the day-to-day struggle of the Chinese Communist Party. The resolution notes only certain aspects of the incorrect tactic which leads to the separation of the advance-guard from

the masses. It speaks of the practice of terror in the sphere of the trade union movement, of the harmfulness of methods of enforced conduct of strikes, of unprepared and unorganised attacks both in the towns and in the villages, and in particular of the danger of playing with insurrections. "Playing with insurrections," says the resolution, "instead of a mass insurrection of workers and peasants, is a sure method of ensuring the defeat of the revolution."

Certain examples of the dangerous game of playing with insurrections have already been cited in the Party press. We learnt that the Honan Provincial Committee, basing itself on the political line of insurrection worked out by the C.C., divided Honan into several districts, assigning to them dates for the outbreak of insurrection "from 10th to 17th November, 1927." We also learnt of unprepared attacks in Chang Shi, which ended in complete defeat.

Thus the tactics of the Chinese Communist Party demanded that the Communist International should with the utmost possible severity emphasise the importance of serious and all-round preparation for the rising on the one hand, and on the other should repeat the Leninist caution as to the danger of playing with insurrections.

In all the technical instructions which it formulated in the Chinese resolution, the Comintern Plenum started with the most profound conviction that the movement in China is moving towards a new, mighty outbreak of revolution. All the proposals for diligence in the preparation of the insurrection, for the organisation of the masses, the connection of the movement in the towns with the movement in the villages, are linked by the one idea that the Party must prepare for the organisation of victory in face of a new rise of the revolutionary wave. The proximity of this rise is demonstrated by the intense



revolutionary struggle which is continuing in various parts of China, despite the reign of White Terror.

#### THE STRUGGLE AGAINST TROTSKYISM

It was in this connection that the Comintern Plenum laid the obligation on all sections of the Communist International "to struggle against the calumnies of the social-democrats and Trotskyists, who declare that the Chinese revolution is liquidated."

The tasks of the international proletariat and its advance-guard, the sections of the Communist International, are of course not exhausted merely by a struggle against the calumniators who, by their legends concerning the defeat of the Chinese revolution, untie the hands of imperialists and set them free for the enslavement of China. The slogan raised by the Eighth Plenum of the Comintern, calling for the defence of the Russian and the Chinese revolutions, is not merely not out of date, but is taking on fresh vitality as the Chinese revolution transfers to the Soviet stage of its development. Just as the forces of counter-revolution are directed and governed by foreign imperialists, so the fate of the Chinese revolution is inseparably bound up with the active assistance and the active support of the proletariat of all capitalist countries in general, and of those imperialist countries in particular who head the bloody struggle against the Chinese revolution.

#### HOSTILITY OF THE MILITARISTS TO THE U.S.S.R.

The soundness of the central slogan raised by the Eighth Plenum is confirmed also by the course of events in China itself. It is very characteristic that the generals' Kuomintang considered it their duty to supplement their terror against the workers and peasants in China itself by a series of hostile demonstrations against

the U.S.S.R. Chiang Kai Shek and Wang Ting Wei wanted to show the imperialists that in the struggle both against the Chinese revolutionaries and against the U.S.S.R. they could not only rival Chang Tso Lin but even surpass him. This tactic of the Kuomintang traitors once more demonstrated that the fire of the world counter-revolution is directed simultaneously against the U.S.S.R. and against the Chinese revolution, and only a powerful return fire by the united efforts of the wage slaves and the colonial slaves can guarantee the triumph of the world revolution and the defeat of world imperialism.

#### THE TASKS OF THE CHINESE C.P. AND OF ALL COMMUNIST SECTIONS

The Chinese revolution sets tasks of enormous difficulty both for the world proletariat and for the working class of China in the first place, for the latter are in the first line of fire at the front of the struggle against imperialism. It would be a fatal mistake to shut our eyes to the fact that the Communist Parties in Europe and America have not succeeded in opposing the organisers of the bloody war against the Chinese revolution with the mobilised divisions of the revolutionary proletariat. The slogan of the defence of the Chinese revolution was for a time repeated at workers' meetings and in the Party press, but the Communist Parties have not developed sufficient energy to establish a real, powerful movement under the common slogan: "Hands off China!" Worse than this, in certain countries the imperialists, with the active assistance of the social-reformists, have succeeded in exterminating the elementary beginnings of a proletarian movement in defence of the Chinese revolution.

The time has now come to betake ourselves with



fresh energy to the work of organising active aid to the Chinese revolution. Although the imperialists, and Britain in particular, are now withdrawing part of their armed forces from China, they are none the less not only continuing their policy of suppressing the Chinese revolutionary movement, but are acting with more and more shameless effrontery as the complete masters of the Chinese people. The social-reformists wish to represent the Chinese revolution as liquidated because they wish to conceal from the workers' eyes and attention the bloody drama which is being played in various parts of China. So much the greater is the obligation laid on the advance-guard of the working class to participate actively in the preparative work which the Chinese Communist Party is now carrying on, confident in the inevitability and proximity of a fresh mighty revolutionary ferment.

Still more difficult are the tasks with which the Chinese Communist Party is itself confronted. In the few brief years of its existence it has passed through the most tremendous struggles, in which struggles it has displayed astonishing heroism and astonishing devotion to the proletarian revolution. It has emerged from the last great battles with enormous losses. The results of those losses were manifested in those political errors and vacillations, which they are now called upon to correct by the staff of the world revolution. But the Chinese Communist Party cannot confine itself only to struggle against those "left" putschist deviations which have been observable in its ranks of recent days. It also has to carry on an intense struggle against not only the openly yellow trade unions, organised by the agents of Chiang Kai Shek, but also with the so-called "True-Communist" Workers' and Peasants' Party. The organisers of this new "Workers' and Peasants'" Party are certain former Communists, who by using phrases such

as "a genuinely Communist Party" are trying to conceal their retreat from Communism at the moment when Chinese Communism is under the most ruthless fire of the enemy. In its resolution the last Comintern Plenum noted the necessity of carrying on the most resolute struggle against the renegades and traitors who under the banner of a "Workers' and Peasants' Party" are actually trying to establish a Menshevik, anti-worker, anti-peasant party, which will be an obedient instrument in the hands of the generals' Kuomintang.

Thus the Chinese Communist Party has to fight on two fronts, against putschism in its own ranks and against all Menshevik attempts to exploit the depression which has developed as the result of the serious defeats, and to exploit that depression in the interests of demoralising the revolutionary movement. This struggle on two fronts will have to be accompanied by a most intense and most energetic campaign for the purpose of mobilising and organising the great proletarian masses for the forthcoming decisive struggles.

Will the Chinese Communist Party be equal to the complex tasks which are laid upon it by the course of history? It is sufficient to turn to its glorious past in order to find there adequately convincing proofs permitting of an affirmative answer to the question. In July, 1927, the Comintern noted a number of serious and profound political errors in the activity of the Chinese Communist Party. The last, Ninth Plenum admitted that the August conference of the Chinese Party had in the main corrected the errors noted by the Communist International. Within a short time the Chinese Communist Party had not only let loose an agrarian revolution, but was actually heading it, simultaneously directing the revolutionary attacks of the working class, and finally organising the Canton insurrection. This experience of



the past is a guarantee that the Chinese Communist Party, with the aid of the staff of the world revolution and the active support of the advance-guard of the working class throughout the world, will be able to deal with the tasks laid upon it.

In conclusion, we indicate our further task of exceptional importance, which arises before all sections of the Comintern in the course of their accomplishing the task of organising aid for the Chinese revolution. We have in mind the concluding section of the Chinese resolution, in which we read :

"The Sections of the Communist International in imperialist countries must struggle more than hitherto for the recalling of armies and navies from China, against all attempts at annexation and partitioning of Chinese territory, against the policy of strangling the Chinese revolutionary movement."

The struggle for the Chinese revolution is a struggle against imperialism, against social-reformism, against capitalist stabilisation, and for the triumph of the world revolution.

The differentiations within the working class and the leftward trend of the great proletarian masses set up a favourable situation for the intensification of the struggle against imperialism, and for the linking of that struggle with the struggle against capitalist rationalisation. In the present stage of capitalist stabilisation the struggle can be successful and fruitful only if it is directed against the social-reformists, which are equally assisting in the exploitation of the workers in capitalist countries under the banner of "peace in industry," and in the oppression of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples under the banner of "the progress of civilisation."

## APPENDIX

### RESOLUTION ON THE TROTSKYIST OPPOSITION (Unanimously adopted at the session held on 15th February on the Report of comrade Bukharin)

The Plenum of the E.C.C.I. marks with satisfaction that the Fifteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. resolutely put an end to the Trotskyist Opposition by expelling it from the ranks of the Party. The Plenum is in full and complete accord with the decisions of the C.P.S.U. and the measures taken by the C.P.S.U. through the Soviet organs for cutting short the anti-Soviet activities of the Opposition.

The Plenum of the E.C.C.I. holds that the decisions of the Fifteenth Congress are of tremendous significance for the further consolidation of the proletarian dictatorship and for the construction of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.

The Fifteenth Party Congress undoubtedly correctly mapped out the further path of socialist industrialisation of Soviet economy on the basis of greater planned influence of the proletarian State on the economic development of the country, further ousting of the elements of private capitalism, extensive collectivisation of peasant undertakings and improvement of the material conditions of the working class and the broad toiling masses in general.

Whereas in all capitalist countries we witness a capitalist offensive on the working class, finding expression in the lengthening of the working day, in the U.S.S.R., according to the decisions of the Fifteenth Party Congress the seven-hour working day is being introduced and the struggle for a higher cultural level of the toiling masses is assuming ever wider dimensions.

The Plenum welcomes the decisions of the Congress of the C.P.S.U. directed towards the improvement and simplification of the machinery of proletarian dictatorship and towards drawing still broader sections of the masses of workers and peasants into the administration of the country. The influx of a hundred thousand workers from the bench to the Party at the moment of most acute struggle of the Opposition against the C.P.S.U. shows that the C.P.S.U., its leadership and policy enjoy the undivided confidence and



support of broad masses of the working class who see in Leninist unity, in the Leninist policy of their Party, the guarantee of a firm and victorious proletarian dictatorship.

The Plenum of the E.C.C.I. considers correct the analysis of the international economic and political situation given by the Fifteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U., pointing out the following characteristic tendencies in the contemporary historical period:

1. The sharpening contradictions between capitalist groups in the struggle for spheres of domination and the re-division of the world, the sharpening of the struggle between imperialism and the oppressed colonial peoples, the sharpening struggle of imperialism against the U.S.S.R., the growing pre-requisites for new imperialist wars.

2. The growing power of capitalist trusts, their even greater merging with the bourgeois State, even greater merging of the social-democratic and reformist leaders with the economic and political system of the imperialist organisations, the ever-growing pressure of capital on the working class.

3. The radicalisation of the working masses in connection with the bourgeois offensive on the proletariat, finding expression in the growing strike conflicts, higher political activity of the working class, growing sympathy of the international proletariat for the U.S.S.R., growing elements of a new revolutionary sweep in France.

4. The joint attack on the Communists by the employers' organisations, the bourgeois State and social-democracy; the efforts of the social-reformists to expel the Communists from the mass organisations of the working class, the intensification of the campaign of slander and calumny against the Communists in general and against the first proletarian dictatorship in the world in particular, on the part of the reformists.

The coming phase of development will be marked by new collisions between the working class and the bourgeoisie and a fierce struggle between the social-democrats and the Communists for influence on the working class. International social-democracy which has long since taken the course of coalition with the bourgeoisie and full support of its imperialist policy in favour of class peace and support of capitalist rationalisation is trying to overcome the process of radicalisation of the working class and to side-track the

working class on to the path of its treacherous policy. This object is served on the one hand by the fierce struggle against the Communists by means of expulsion from the trade unions, by means of helping the machinery of bourgeois dictatorship in persecuting the Communists, by means of abominable slander and falsehood, and on the other hand, the international social-democrats are viciously slandering the U.S.S.R. and the C.P.S.U., realising that one of the most important forms of radicalisation of the working class is its growing sympathy for the U.S.S.R.

This whole machine of falsehood and slander is set going by the social-democrats in order to undermine the growing sympathies of the international proletariat of the U.S.S.R. and Communism, in order to discredit the real successes of socialist construction in the first proletarian dictatorship of the world, in order to side-track the workers from the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism, and to persuade them to support the bourgeois policy of capitalist rationalisation, effected at the expense of the working class, and to adopt their treacherous policy of "industrial peace."

An especially false and pharisaical role in the struggle against the U.S.S.R. and the C.P.S.U. is played by the leaders of the so-called "left" wing of social-reformism, the Max Adlers and Bauers, the Levis, Longuets, Lansburys, and Maxtons, who realising the sympathies of the radicalising workers for the U.S.S.R., come out against proletarian dictatorship more cunningly and conceal their struggle against the U.S.S.R. with hypocritical phrases of sympathy for it and by its "conditional" support. The meaning of this tactic consists in the desire to retard the going over of the working masses to the side of Communism and to preserve support for social-democracy. From the point of view of the struggle for the radicalising masses of workers, these so-called "left" leaders of opportunism are the most dangerous enemies of Communism, the Comintern and the U.S.S.R. The menace of Trotskyism in the international Labour movement consists, in the present period, in the fact that the Trotskyists directly support the ideas and policy of the "left" servants of reformism, that they strengthen the "left" leaders of opportunism in their struggle against Communism and the U.S.S.R., that they increase the means of deception and slander which is made use of by the reformists in the struggle against Communism, that Trotskyism has become a species of Bauerism and similar reformism. The Trotsky-



ist Opposition has entirely gone over to the position assuming an avowedly counter-revolutionary character. Slandering, under cover of phrases about loyalty to the revolution and the U.S.S.R., the Communist International, the C.P.S.U. and the proletarian dictatorship, the foreign and domestic policy of which they falsify and distort just as much as the social-democrats, the Trotskyists, together with international social-democracy, base their hope on the fall of the Soviet Government.

From factional struggle within the C.P.S.U., the Trotskyist Opposition proceeded with the organisation of a second party, waging a struggle in the streets and undertaking open anti-Soviet demonstrations which, if they had not received a crushing set-back from the broad masses of the proletariat, might have developed into a certain menace for the proletarian dictatorship, rallying around the banner of the Trotskyist Opposition the class elements inimical to the proletarian dictatorship.

Of a more open counter-revolutionary character was the group, headed by Sapronov, which directly attacks the principles of Leninism and openly calls for a struggle against the Soviet Government, differing in no respect by its programme or its tactics from the counter-revolutionary elements, from counter-revolutionary types such as Korsch, Katz, Eastman, Souvarine, and others. The proletarian dictatorship cannot and must not allow any counter-revolutionary action, no matter what banner it is flying.

The Trotskyist Opposition, endeavouring to break up the C.P.S.U. from within, was ideologically and organisationally smashed, thanks to the firmness of principle and iron solidarity of the C.P.S.U. and the working class of the U.S.S.R. and fell to pieces in the form of several groups, some of which (Kamenev and Zinoviev) are beginning, not without vacillation, to return to the Party positions, gradually abandoning Trotskyism—which once more proves the correctness of the political line of the C.P.S.U. and the C.I.—and some of which vacillate between the Party and the Trotskyists. An insignificant group of followers of Trotskyism which remained intact, having suffered defeat in the C.P.S.U. and in the U.S.S.R., is trying to transfer the centre of gravity of its struggle to the other sections of the Comintern. The true opportunist face of the Trotskyist Opposition is most clearly expressed in the programme advanced by the Trotskyists for the consolidation of kindred groups of the

other countries. The Trotskyist Opposition, first of all, appeals to the obviously opportunist and counter-revolutionary elements, such as Souvarine and Paz in France. It entered into an alliance with the anti-proletarian petty-bourgeois Maslov group in Germany, the Treint and Suzanne Girault group in France, with the groups which are now speaking about a turn towards "Fascism" and "Tsarism" in the U.S.S.R. The German group is the strongest base of the Trotskyist Opposition outside the U.S.S.R. It established connections on the one hand with the counter-revolutionary Korsch group (joint action during the Hamburg elections) and on the other, establishes contact with the left social-democrats. Now it is already beginning to organise openly into an independent party known as the "Lenin League." It is aiming at becoming an international centre uniting all opposition groups for a struggle against the C.I. and the U.S.S.R.

The Trotskyist Opposition is trying to win over to its side the renegades, Rosmer and Monatte. Such anti-proletarian opportunist elements are now rallying to the Trotskyist Opposition as the Hula group in Czecho-Slovakia, Roland Holst in Holland and the "left" social-democrats of Belgium, a group of Italian emigrants in France, standing on the same counter-revolutionary platform as Korsch, and finally the right elements expelled from the Workers' Party of America (Lore and others) supported by the German Social-Democrats of America.

All the worst elements in the Labour movement, the openly opportunist elements in the Communist movement, all renegade groups kicked out from the ranks of the Comintern are now uniting on the Trotskyist platform of struggle against the U.S.S.R., the C.P.S.U. and the Comintern, playing the role of one of the most abominable tools of international social-democracy, against the Communists in the struggle of the latter for influence on the broad masses of the working class.

The Plenum of the E.C.C.I. considers that the evolution towards social-democracy performed by the Trotskyist Opposition, its avowedly anti-Soviet position, thoroughly hostile to the proletarian dictatorship, its disruptive methods within the Communist Parties, resulted in a situation in which adherence to the Trotskyist Opposition and solidarity with its views is incompatible with further membership of the Communist International.



The Communist Parties must carry on a ruthless struggle for the liquidation of the Trotskyist groups, concentrating it primarily against their leaders. At the same time it is necessary to continue an ideological struggle for winning those workers who are still vacillating but have not broken with the Opposition.

The Communist Parties must also increase their work in exposing the Trotskyist Opposition among the broad masses of the working class as the sharp struggle of the Communists against international social-democracy inevitably means a sharpening of the struggle against the anti-Communist, Trotskyist groups both in the U.S.S.R. and in the other countries.

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